



Art of survival in Zaire

'Where bribe-taking does not suffice, juggling several jobs becomes the only alternative'



Man or Superman?

'Take the Olympics out of my career, have I not been successful? I've been very successful'



MARCH 22 / MARCH 23 1997



Second-hand Rolls

'They are highly polished, but the blazer gleam is likely to be in the eye of the beholder buyers'



All you need is cash

'I'd already handled Johnny Cash debentures, the Jethro Tull 2009s, and the Mott the Hoople 30-year notes'

Page I

Page III

http://www.ft.com

Page XVIII

Page XX

Clinton and Yeltsin agree over weapons treaty and soften line on Nato expansion

Helsinki talks reach nuclear breakthrough

By Chrystia Freeland and Matthew Kaminski in Helsinki

Russian President Boris Yeltsin and President Bill Clinton made an unexpected breakthrough on nuclear disarmament yesterday, but agreed to disagree over Nato's planned eastward expansion.

At their summit in Helsinki, Mr Yeltsin vowed to push the stalled 1993 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (Start II) through the Russian parliament.

Under the treaty the two sides would dismantle two thirds of their strategic nuclear warheads.

That would clear the way for a bold new deal which the two men vowed to negotiate, proposing a Start III

treaty that would slash the US and Russian nuclear arsenals to 20 per cent of their cold war levels within 10 years.

The two presidents also found a way to mollify Russia's continued opposition to Nato's plans to invite eastern European states to join this summer.

A separate agreement between Russia and Nato would be concluded before the eastern Europeans are invited to at Nato's July summit.

The proposed deal, described by Mr Clinton as offering Russia "a voice but not a veto" in Nato decision-making, would be signed by the leaders of all 16 members of the organisation.

However, it need not be ratified by their national leg-

islatures, a condition which falls short of Russia's earlier demand for a legally-binding charter. Mr Clinton softened that rejection by offering Russia swift accession to the west's big international economic and political organisations, including the World Trade Organisation, and an enhanced role in the G-7 group of industrial nations.

Mr Clinton - who has been anxious to push ahead with Nato's embrace of eastern Europe without creating a rift with Russia - held out the agreements as proof of a strengthening partnership between the US and its former adversary.

"We agreed to disagree about the question of expansion but we agreed that there must be a partnership between Nato and Russia

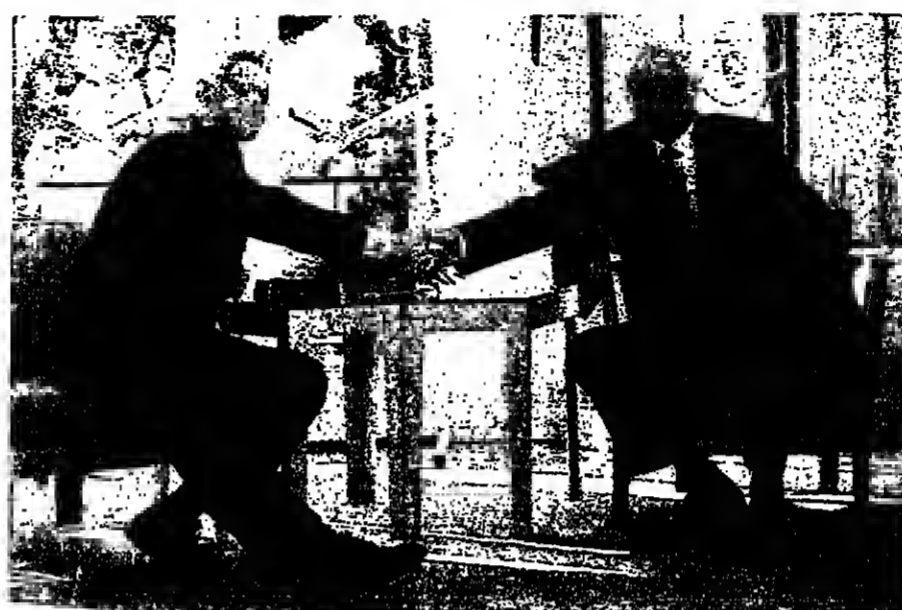
going forward into the future," Mr Clinton said.

Mr Yeltsin backed up that vision, saying the summit helped "open a new era in US-Russian relations".

In an early effort to sell the deal to a potentially hostile Russian audience, Mr Yeltsin angrily rejected a suggestion that Moscow had "betrayed" its political friendship for the economic pledges.

And Mr Yeltsin also insisted that Russia had won more committed economic and investment backing from what he characterised as a previously grudging United States.

On the economic front, Mr Clinton promised Russia greater participation at the forthcoming meeting of the G-7 in Devoer, which would



Arms talks: Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin in Helsinki yesterday

be called "The Summit of the 8" in honour of Moscow's expanded role.

The two presidents set out a timetable for Russia's admission to other international organisations - the Paris Club of creditors in 1997 and the WTO in 1998.

Mr Yeltsin will also take home a pledge that Nato's nuclear weapons will not be stationed on the territory of the new member states and US support for formalising this intention in the Nato-Russia agreement.

That is likely to carry

great political weight in Russia, but could leave Nato open to charges of creating a two-tier structure. Mr Clinton rejected that view, insisting "there are no second-class members".

Russia's smiles, Page 2

Tel Aviv blast puts Middle East peace in doubt

By Judy Dempsey in Jerusalem

The future of the Middle East peace process was thrown into uncertainty yesterday after a suicide bomber killed two people and injured 44 in a Tel Aviv cafe.

The bomber, who blew himself up, had placed two plastic bags containing explosives between tables in the Apropo cafe in downtown Tel Aviv. The cafe and streets were crowded as Israelis started celebrating the Purim holiday, a festival that marks the salvation of Jews from genocide in ancient Persia.

Police said Hamas, the Islamic militant group, had claimed responsibility in a telephone call.

The bombing took place three days after Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, gave the go-ahead for the construction of a Jewish settlement at Har Homa in Arab east Jerusalem despite criticism from around the world that it could lead to violence.

Mr Netanyahu blamed the Palestinian Authority, led by Mr Yasser Arafat, saying it had indirectly given a green light to terrorist groups to launch attacks.

At a news conference at the end of the Helsinki summit with Russian president Mr Boris Yeltsin, Mr Bill Clinton, the US president, condemned the bombing.

Mr Arafat telephoned Mr Ezer Weizmann, the Israeli president, to express his condolences.

Man in the News, Page 7

Chinese puzzle out the answers on Hong Kong

By John Ridding in Hong Kong

Contenders must know What's My Party's Line on handover

From bustling Shanghai to booming Shenzhen, China will settle down after dinner tomorrow to watch the country's glitziest quiz show.

Not for these viewers, though, celebrity trivia or mathematical teasers.

Instead the contestants will be thoroughly grilled on Hong Kong, facing such posers as: What is its surface area? What are the basic principles of the post-colonial constitution? Where is the Hawaii of the east?

With 100 days to go before

the colony returns to China, fascination with the long-lost capitalist outpost is building - and so is a government propaganda drive.

Deng Xiaoping may have departed, but his goal of regaining Hong Kong still yields huge political capital for a government anxious to remove the stain of colonial humiliations and foster national pride.

Tomorrow's broadcast is the biggest event so far in a carefully-orchestrated education drive. CCTV, the

state television network, believes there will be 200m viewers for the grand final, which follows eight months of heats across the country.

Ms Tao Weigian, director of propaganda at C-Boss Cosmetics (Wuhan) Co, is rooting for the Hubei team, which features two members from her company.

"After they won the semi-final we awarded each of them 800 yuan (\$96) and new suits," she says. "The provincial government held a meeting to celebrate,

encouraging them to become the champions."

Mr Ding Jiansuo, Communist Youth League secretary of the Qilianshan Nuclear Power Plant and a member of the Zhejiang team, hopes victory will allow him to travel south. "I've always wanted to go to Hong Kong and I hope I will be able to after the quiz."

Mr Ding and his rivals will face a quiz format developed in the west and increasingly popular in China. Introduced by the

theme tune "Soaring Aspirations", it will be hosted by Mr Zhao Zhongxiang, China's best-known MC.

Between questions there will be music and dancing. And of course there will be prizes.

No cars or exotic holidays, but the winning team will receive a car and 15,000 yuan. That is big money in China, where a state worker might pocket 600 yuan a month.

Cash rather than coercion serves to forge consensus.

the autonomy of Hong Kong after the handover. Who takes care of Hong Kong affairs? asked the MC.

"Hong Kong people take care of Hong Kong affairs," parroted a contestant.

Such questions underline two concerns: that China's cadres will stampede into the territory in search of spoils and, more serious, that Hong Kong freedoms will follow sovereignty across the border.

Tomorrow's quiz show may borrow the tricks of western TV. But political ideas are best left in Repulse Bay, home of Hong Kong's improbable Hawaii.

Man in the News, Page 7

News General

Macedonia jails banker

The imprisonment of Tome Nenovski, deputy governor of Macedonia's central bank, after the collapse of the private savings bank TAT, highlights the government's anxiety to avert a crisis similar to that in neighbouring Albania. Mr Nenovski was allegedly among businessmen and politicians in the former Yugoslav republic who borrowed at reduced rates from TAT, which is suspected of investing depositors' funds in pyramid schemes in Albania. Page 2

Pakistan plans tax cuts to secure IMF aid: Pakistan is planning to slash import tariffs and cut corporate and personal taxes by a substantial margin next week in a renewed effort to seek fresh credits from the International Monetary Fund for its troubled economy. The moves follow departure of an IMF mission after agreement to suspend an \$831m standby loan in the hope of securing a larger longer-term provision. Page 3

Chicago is world's busiest airport: Chicago's O'Hare retained its position as the world's busiest airport last year, handling 69.1m passengers. Atlanta remained in second place with 63.3m passengers, but Los Angeles overtook London's Heathrow to move into third place, handling 57.9m passengers to Heathrow's 56m. Page 3

Lloyd's endless battles: Most Lloyd's of London "names" may have given up their right to sue the insurance market by accepting \$5m in compensation for huge losses suffered in the recent past, but litigating die-hards can draw comfort from the knowledge that, for some, the legal battles will never end. Page 4

Last puff for tobacco industry?

Tobacco industry shares fell yesterday after one US company admitted that smoking causes cancer, set up a payout plan for successful litigants and decided to hand over thousands of internal documents. But analysts remained unconvinced that Liggett's moves would be a real blow to the industry.

Report, Page 4; Analysis, Page 7; Lex, Page 24

News Business

Kodak shares tumble

Shares in Eastman Kodak tumbled 11 per cent early yesterday, wiping \$1bn from its stock market value, as the US photographic products company revealed its sales growth had ground to a halt in the first two months of this year. The news follows recent comments by Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan who said he did not believe US share prices were too high, provided companies were able to match the high expectations for continued profits growth. Page 24

Steel bid hits at Germany's heartlands: Dortmund, like other parts of Germany's old industrial heartland, faces 20 per cent unemployment if worst fears come to pass in the coal and steel industries. So the bid by steelmaker Krupp Hoechst for rival Thyssen is seen as a further blow to the country's economy. Page 7

Bre-X shares suspended: Shares in Bre-X Minerals, the small Canadian company that claims to have found the world's largest gold deposit, were suspended after an Indonesian newspaper cast doubt on the size of the reserves. Citing a report by Freeport-McMoran Copper & Gold, the US company which has agreed to develop the Bussang mine on the island of Sumatra, the newspaper said reserves were far below the 11m ounces previously estimated by Bre-X and might not be commercially exploitable. Page 24

Shares stabilise after turbulent week: The latest Alan Greenspan inspired storm in global markets looked to have blown itself out, but not without leaving investors bruised by the experience. The FTSE 100, which has had to endure a series of dismal performances, finished 3.3 lower at 4,254.8. On the week, the Footsie has fallen almost 170 points, or 3.8 per cent. Page 20

Matif invites bets on Emur Matif: The Paris-based futures and options exchange, unveiled a range of new products, including options that let investors bet on the likelihood of European monetary union going ahead. Page 23

Lonrho signals culture changes: Lonrho shareholders will be asked on Wednesday to approve Sir John Craven, a merchant banker, to succeed Sir John Leahy, former UK ambassador to South Africa, as chairman. Nothing could be more indicative of the changed management objectives at Britain's most diverse conglomerate. Page 22

Contents

News	Companies	Managed Funds
International News	Companies & Finance	Money Markets
UK News	21-23	Recent Issues
Weather	24	Share Information
Lex	24	World Commodities
Features	FT-SE Actuaries	Wall Street
Leader Page	FTSE-4 All Indices	Bourses
Letters	Foreign Exchanges	Weekend FT
Man in the News	Gold Markets	Section II
	Equity Options	
	London SE	
	USE Dealings	

Albania LQ200	Austria S407	Bahrain D11.200
Bermuda S2.00	Bulgaria B775	Canada C22.00
China RMB35.50	CIS US\$4.00	Croatia K16.00
Czechia CZ1.50	Czechia CZ1.50	Denmark DKR60.00
Egypt E25.50	France F44.00	Finland Fmk18.00
Germany DM12.00	Germany DM12.00	Gibraltar G3.75
Greece Dr150	Hong Kong HK\$20	Hungary H\$240
India Rs75	Indonesia Rp1,000	Italy L2,000
Israel NIS1.00	Japan Y500	Jordan Jd1.75
Kazakhstan US\$4.50	Korea Won 3000	Kuwait Kd1.75
Latvia Ls1.00	Latvia Ls1.00	Lebanon Ls1.00
Lithuania Lt1.00	Lithuania Lt1.00	Madagascar MG1.00
Malaysia M1.00	Malaysia M1.00	Mexico MXN1.00
Moldova MDL1.00	Moldova MDL1.00	Netherlands F1.75
Monaco MC1.00	Monaco MC1.00	Norway Nkr22.00
Norway Nkr22.00	Norway Nkr22.00	Oman OMR1.75
Poland Zl 2.50	Poland Zl 2.50	Portugal Pte200
Romania Lei13.00	Romania Lei13.00	Spain Ptas200
South Africa R12.00	South Africa R12.00	Switzerland Sfr7.20
Sweden SEK1.00	Sweden SEK1.00	Switzerland Sfr7.20
Switzerland Sfr7.20	Switzerland Sfr7.20	Taiwan NT\$20
Taiwan NT\$20	Taiwan NT\$20	Turkey TL1.00
Turkey TL1.00	Turkey TL1.00	USA \$1.00
USA \$1.00	USA \$1.00	Yugoslavia YUD1.00

© THE FINANCIAL TIMES LIMITED 1997 No 33,247 LONDON • LEEDS • PARIS • FRANKFURT • STOCKHOLM • MADRID • NEW YORK • LOS ANGELES • TOKYO • HONG KONG

Thought for the day

The average retirement lasts 20-30 years. Will you be sitting pretty?

It pays to check out your pension options with a professional who's got his stripes. Our free 1/2 hour consultation helps you determine which thousands of pensions might be right for you - an excellent plan all.

0117 971 1177

One phone call. Three approved IFAs wait for you. Free information. Or call in where you see the firm sign.

See an IFA

THE FINANCIAL TIMES APPROVED INVESTMENT ADVISOR SERVICE IS A SERVICE PROVIDED BY A PERSON REGISTERED WITH THE FINANCIAL INVESTMENT AUTHORITY.

JPM 10150

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

FINANCIAL TIMES

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL
Tel: +44 171-873 3000 Telex: 922186 Fax: +44 171-407 5700

Saturday March 22 1997

The rate for the jobs

In the Delphic rituals of US interest rate setting, Mr Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, seemed this week to show a nice sense of history. Seemed of course. No bankable prophecies can be made from the fact that on Thursday he followed the same pattern as in February 1994, when the US Federal Funds rate started its 12-month climb from 3 per cent to 6 per cent.

Then as now, Mr Greenspan chose to address Congress's Joint Economic Committee, shortly before an important meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee. Commentators speculated that this time also Mr Greenspan was preparing the markets for bad news. Although it is now widely expected that the committee will agree on Tuesday to raise the rate by ¼ percentage point to 5½ per cent, it will face a difficult decision. Despite the steady fall in unemployment as the economy continues to expand at around 4 per cent a year, plenty of US congressmen think that higher interest rates are just what the jobs market does not need. And respectable arguments can be advanced that although the present US unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent is the lowest since 1969, this may not be a sign, in a more flexible labour market, that inflationary pressures are about to burst out.

Survey data suggest that in the 1990s the proportion of those employed by large firms who fear the sack rose from a quarter to nearly a half. Such insecurity, combined with the cost pressures resulting from a strong dollar, might well mean that the engines of growth can be run at higher revolutions than in the past.

But if so, exactly how much further can unemployment be allowed to fall before shortages of labour start to drive up wages and then prices? This is now the most important question, in the UK as well as the US, behind the authorities' decisions on tightening monetary policy. And nobody quite knows the answer.

High unemployment

In Germany and France unemployment is so high that, for the time being, this question does not matter very much. However, in the US and the UK, output is now on some estimates quite close to full capacity, as measured by long run trends. So the question is: have workers changed their habits?

In the US, the fact that consumer prices have remained unexpectedly subdued, while output has grown fast is prima facie evidence that this is indeed so. As Mr Greenspan put it: "The rate of pay increase was markedly less than historical relationships with labour market conditions would have predicted." Has something similar been going on in the UK, where the fear of being fired has also made workers remarkably more subdued in recent years?

Lively argument

The answer is to some extent "yes". But the Treasury and the Bank of England have been conducting a lively argument as to how much the labour market has changed, as they wrangle over the ¼ point base rate rise which Mr Kenneth Clarke, the chancellor, refuses to agree.

In the UK, as in the US, the fall in unemployment, down again last week to 6.2 per cent of the workforce, has been faster than most people expected and inflation (at 2.9 per cent in February) has remained more subdued than "historical relationships" would have suggested. But wage increases are starting to show a worrying tendency to accelerate, having reached 5 per cent in January.

On neither side of the Atlantic can fast growth be combined with low inflation for ever. And since an interest rate rise has little effect in slowing growth for nine months or more, the authorities need to act promptly.

In the UK, nothing will be done before the election on May 1. But the new government must make this one of its first tasks along with reducing its deficit.

The Fed also needs to act soon, probably next week. This may well stimulate a general rise in European interest rates, which have been held very low on the continent and are likely to be under upward pressure anyway, as the German and French economies move out of recession (achieving perhaps 3 per cent growth this year according to some forecasts).

The rise in US rates is very unlikely to be as steep as the seven-step increase in 1994. However, if the same pattern is to some extent followed, European market rates are likely to be dragged along behind. That may be bad for jobs in France and Germany. But Mr Greenspan is not yet in charge of Europe.



Under scrutiny: (left to right) Sir Gordon Downey whose investigation of sleaze allegations involving MPs including Tim Smith and Neil Hamilton was ordered by John Major

Questions about questions

A controversy over parliamentary standards has become more dangerous for the UK prime minister, says James Blitz

For the past three years, the British Conservative party has been rattled by repeated allegations of "sleaze" against a handful of its MPs. At the heart of the claims is the accusation that men such as Mr Neil Hamilton, the former trade minister, and Mr Tim Smith, a former Northern Ireland minister, were paid by an outsider to table parliamentary questions. They are then accused of breaking rules by failing to register the payments with the Commons authorities.

But in the past three days, the cash-for-questions row has developed into something more dangerous for the government – and, in particular, for Mr John Major, the prime minister.

With a general election just six weeks away, questions are now being raised about whether the prime minister should have acted more resolutely over the charges – and whether, in recent days, he personally tried to scupper an official inquiry into the case.

This hyzantine row originates in the late 1980s, during the closing years of Mrs Margaret Thatcher's period as prime minister. Mr Mohamed Fayed, the Egyptian-born chairman of Harrods, was waging a vigorous campaign against critics of his take-

over of House of Fraser. They had accused him of disguising his humble origins and lack of wealth to buy the store group.

When a Department of Trade and Industry inquiry was mounted into the affair in April 1987, Mr Fayed began a campaign of intense lobbying to put his case. With the help of Mr Ian Greer, a prominent lobbyist, he sought the support of several MPs to advocate his case in parliament – including Mr Hamilton, Mr Smith and Sir Michael Crichton, a senior backbencher.

But in 1994, the Harrods boss – piqued by his failure to get British citizenship and raging at "corruption" in high places – made a series of allegations about payments to the MPs which he claimed ran into tens of thousands of pounds.

In September of that year, he informed the prime minister – through an intermediary – about the allegations. He alleged the MPs had failed to record the payments on the register of members' interests. After 30 days, angered at what he felt was Mr Major's failure to act, he passed the details to The Guardian, the left-leaning newspaper, triggering the resignation of Mr Hamilton and Mr Smith as ministers.

In the two years since, the MPs have vigorously rebutted the charges. Mr Hamilton launched a libel action against The Guardian but withdrew in October after he said he could not afford to pursue his case. The allegations were then passed by Mr Fayed and The Guardian to Sir Gordon Downey, the independent commissioner for standards.

Sir Gordon had been due to hand his report – arguably the last word on this epic case – to the Commons committee on standards and privileges next Monday. But Mr Major's decision to end Commons business ahead of the general election required the committee's dissolution by this weekend. The Guardian yesterday published parts of the evidence it had received as a party to Sir Gordon's inquiry – a step that has led to accusations that it is in "contempt of parliament".

Throughout this affair, the gravest charges have been levelled against Mr Hamilton. The main allegation is that he personally took thousands of pounds in cash, passed to him in brown envelopes from Mr Fayed.

Mr Hamilton has always denied the charges, and yesterday said The Guardian's allegations were "a pack of lies". But the affair has now raised much more serious questions which have overshadowed the good economic news that the Conservatives had

hoped would get their election campaign off to a flying start.

The first is whether Mr Major called for an early break-up of parliament to scupper Sir Gordon's inquiry ahead of the election. Labour argues that no prime minister has "prorogued" parliament as much as six weeks before an election since 1918. It adds that Mr Major must have had an ulterior motive in setting such a deadline, forcing the government to ditch prized legislation such as the education and criminal justice bills.

Mr Major argues he knew nothing of Sir Gordon's timetable. He says that even if parliament had sat until April 8 (the date of final dissolution), the committee would not have completed the interviews and discussions necessary to reach its conclusions.

Second, Mr Major is accused of appointing Mr Tim Smith as a Northern Ireland minister in 1994, five years after the MP had confessed failure to declare his gains from Mr Fayed to Mr David Waddington, then Conservative chief whip. Mr Waddington advised him to register the latest batch of payments with the Commons authorities, which he promptly did. But Downing Street said yesterday Mr Major had not known about this conversation until October 1994.

Third, the prime minister is accused of unnecessary delay in removing Mr Smith from office once he learnt of the payments.

Mr Fayed made his allegations to the prime minister via an intermediary on September 29 1994. Mr Major immediately asked Sir Robin Butler, the cabinet secretary, to conduct an inquiry into the case.

On October 10, Mr Smith admitted to Sir Robin that he had indeed received the payments. But Mr Smith did not resign until The Guardian published the allegations on October 20.

Downing Street argues Mr Major received Sir Robin's final report on the issue only on October 18 – the day he returned from the Conservative party's annual conference. Mr Smith was required to leave office two days later.

A verdict on these questions and allegations is contained in Sir Gordon's report. This weekend, it remains locked in a cupboard in his office – and it will stay there until after the election when the new House of Commons will consider its findings.

Until then, no one – not even The Guardian – knows what his judgments are. But the damage to the Conservatives and to parliament's reputation as a regulator of its affairs has been done.

The cash-for-questions issue has undermined the Tories' strategy, says John Kampfner

Bogged down by sleaze

Throughout the cash-for-questions affair and other tribulations, Mr Major's strategy has been to distance himself from his MPs. He is fighting the general election on a personal basis, urging voters to opt for him whatever they think of his party.

The events of the past few days have set back this strategy in two ways. They have knocked the Tory message of the week – a strong economy – off the front pages, doing nothing to help the party close its gap in the opinion polls which yesterday reached 27 percentage points in The Independent. More damaging, it has allowed Labour to challenge Mr Major's personal integrity.

"Whatever the truth, he certainly looks like a man who's doing his best to suppress important information," Mr Robin Cook, shadow foreign secretary, said yesterday.

Senior aides of Mr Major acknowledge that Labour won the media battle over the first week. "This has deprived us of so many opportunities to get the show on the road," says one.

Mr Major and his advisers are furious. They believe Mr Tony Blair's team waited 24 hours after Mr Major's announcement of the election date to raise the issue of the timing of prorog-

ation of parliament and Sir Gordon Downey's report. And they say the Commons standards committee would have taken a long time to reach a decision after receiving Sir Gordon's report on allegations against Mr Neil Hamilton and his colleagues.

Yet some Tory MPs are unhappy with the way Mr Major has handled the tawdry business. "This is the best example yet of John Major's characteristic blend of incompetence and concealment," says a former cabinet member. Another ex-minister mocked the prime minister's attempts to distance himself

from his party. "Honest John" has been a good public relations exercise, but we're not taken in by it," he said. "It's a pretty sad state of affairs when you have a prime minister pretending to be a victim of his party's actions."

Mr Major claims to be the champion of the fight against sleaze. He points to his creation of the Nolan committee on standards in public life – to the fury of many of his backbenchers – in 1994.

Yet Labour is making much of the government's opposition last year to Lord Nolan's proposal to force MPs to declare the amount

of money they earn from outside interests. Last year, the Tories, hostile to constitutional change, amended the 300-year-old Bill of Rights to help Mr Hamilton sue the Guardian newspaper. Furthermore, the party says, Mr Major has refused to lift the secrecy surrounding party funding. Tory coffers recovered from a £19m deficit to a surplus of up to £40m over a few years.

Yet according to a recent survey by Mori, only 8 per cent of voters regard "morality and individual behaviour" as important in determining which party they would vote for.

"Nobody out there cares about any of this," said a senior Tory official. "After all, we're not like the French or Italians."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL

We are keen to encourage letters from readers around the world. Letters may be faxed to +44 171-873 5939. e-mail: letters.editor@ft.com. Published letters are also available on the FT web site, <http://www.ft.com>. Translation may be available for letters written in the main international languages.

Turkey gets a raw deal from Europe

From M. Atac.

Sir, in his article "Polite hypocrisy" (March 19), Ian Davidson seems to overlook the long history of Turkish aspiration to adopt western political and social norms which started in the last 100 years of the Ottoman era. At that time, while Turkey was struggling with many crises and drawing criticism from Europe, the idea of its being part of Europe was not questioned. The revolution under Atatürk that brought about the republic was the culmination of this century-long effort to modernise.

Until quite recently the rest of Europe praised Turkey for this historic endeavour. Today it seems everyone in Europe suddenly thinks Turkey is a hugely populous nation of strangers, badly afflicted by poverty, with a hostile religion and an unfamiliar political system.

Turkey should not be treated by responsible people as an alien, which may one day be eligible to enter the gates of Europe solely because of its membership of Nato or its strategic position.

M. Atac,
Ahmet Mithat
Efendi Sok. 21
06550 Cankaya,
Ankara,
Turkey

From Mr Andrew Wigley.

Sir, While the European Union's woes about Turkey continue ("Turkish trouble", March 10) Ertukan's decision to restrict Islamic militancy should be quietly welcomed by the west. Military sway in affairs of state, widespread corruption and infringement of political and press freedoms are understandable reasons for concern.

Yet Turkey has had to deal with a plethora of conflicting and inconsistent signals from Brussels. It is through continuing trade and economic relations that maximum influence can be brought to bear upon Turkey for more fundamental reform. I share your regret, therefore, that at their meeting in Rome, EU Christian Democrats should permanently deny EU membership to Turkey, greatly reducing the EU's bargaining position in promoting democratic and political reform on the turbulent south-east of its continent. The Christian Democrats have been much mistaken in identifying the alienation of Ankara as the path to progress.

Andrew Wigley,
23 rue Général Capiaumont,
1040 Brussels,
Belgium

Opposition to union rights is unsustainable

From Mr Roger Lyons.

Sir, Your report "Labour rejects business fears on trade union powers" (March 18) on employer opposition to Labour's plans for union recognition is very puzzling. David Yeandle of the Engineering Employers Federation, in particular, seems to have lost the plot completely when he talks wildly about job losses and lower investment. What we are, in fact, discussing is a basic civil right for employees. In other words, where 50 per cent plus one of employees (whether union members or not) voting in a secret ballot in favour of their being represented by a trade union, an employer should be obliged to recognise that union.

If workers want to be represented in this way on issues of pay, hours, holidays and training, then many people will find it hard to see what the problem is. This is the dilemma that Mr Yeandle and others will have to face after May 1.

How will they be able to argue credibly against a law which upholds the democratically expressed wish of a majority vote of employees?

Labour is right to stick to its guns, and employers have nothing to fear from these sensible – and long overdue – plans.

Roger Lyons,
general secretary,
MSF Centre,
33-37 Moreland Street,
London
EC1V 8BB, UK

Shell's claim of environmental shift not yet credible

From Mr Tony Janiper.

Sir, The remarks made by Shell this week in respect of its new-found environmental and social awareness ("Rights and Wrogs", March 18) will be warmly welcomed by environmental groups if a shift in policy and company activities results.

We are not, however, convinced that this shift has occurred. Shell's stance on climate change is illustrative of our concerns in this respect.

For example, Shell's senior managing director, Cor Herkstofer, announced this week that a shift to renewable energy was warranted because of expected

climate change, and said: "There is now sufficient evidence to support precautionary action."

Meanwhile, however, Shell remains, along with most other large oil companies, a member of the Global Climatic Coalition. This is an industry lobbying organisation that has tried to undermine the scientific consensus that climate change is happening, has blocked moves to agree carbon dioxide emission reductions, and argues that the cost of "precautionary action" is too high.

Friends of the Earth has written to Shell and other leading fossil-fuel-dependent companies

that belong to this organisation to urge them to terminate their membership and instead to call for urgent action to limit the emission of climate-changing gases.

Their reaction to this call will be most interesting in respect of comparing what they say they support in their environmental and social policy, and what they actually do.

Tony Janiper,
campaigns director,
Friends of the Earth,
26-28 Underwood Street,
London
N1 7JQ, UK

Book now.

FT BOOKSHOP

Call the FT Bookshop free on
0500 500 635
For overseas +44 181 324 5511

and order any book reviewed or featured in the FT. You can also order almost any book currently in print – the list available spans 100,000 titles, including business books, novels, general interest, hardback and paperback.

Books will be sold at RRP which includes postage and packing price in the UK. Outside the UK there is one postage and packing price band for Europe and another for the rest of the world. Call for further details.

Handwritten signature: J. P. 20150

Man in the News • Benjamin Netanyahu

Life and death negotiations

Judy Dempsey on the crisis provoked by the Israeli prime minister's tough stance

Israelis were yesterday looking forward to celebrating Purim, one of the Jewish holidays in the Jewish calendar. Their expectations were shattered when a bomb ripped through a packed cafe in central Tel Aviv, killing two civilians and the bomber, and injuring 44.

The attack came after one of the most tense weeks in Israel since September - when Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, opened an exit to a tunnel in the old city of Jerusalem, close to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of the Moslems' holiest sites. That decision led to violence between Palestinians and Israeli forces, leaving 76 dead.

On Tuesday, Mr Netanyahu ordered work to start on a new Jewish settlement at Har Homa in east Jerusalem which will cut off the Arab parts of the city from the Palestinian-controlled areas of the West Bank. He did so in spite of warnings from King Hussein of Jordan and senior Palestinian leaders that building in Har Homa undermined the principles of the Oslo Peace Accords and could lead to violence.

"We intended to build. We wanted to build. And we are building," says Mr Netanyahu of the work begun on Har Homa.

On Thursday, Mr Netanyahu unveiled plans to wrap up the so-called final status talks on Israel's future borders within six months. The short time frame fuelled concerns among the opposition Labour party and Palestinians that the Israeli govern-

ment intended to by-pass the Oslo peace accords.

Mr Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority, asked his people not to resort to violence. But yesterday's terrorist attack, which police said was the work of a suicide bomber belonging to Hamas, the Islamic resistance movement, showed his difficulty in controlling it.

Mr Netanyahu's defiance of world opinion in going ahead with construction at Har Homa and in deciding to jump directly to final status talks have strengthened his credibility in the coalition - but seriously weakened the peace process.

The final status talks were intentionally left until later because they deal with the most sensitive issues of the entire peace process: Israel's future borders, the Jewish settlements, the fate of the 4m Palestinian refugees and - above all - Jerusalem. By putting them at the top of the peace agenda Mr Netanyahu, so his supporters believe, has regained the political initiative.

The Labour party, led by Mr Shimon Peres, is already involved in a bitter leadership contest. The party, which cannot agree on whether the government should leap-frog to final status talks, is tearing itself apart over whether to join a national unity government.

Mr Ehud Barak, the former chief-of-staff and the Labour party's frontrunner for the leadership, believes that to move directly to final status talks would be a grave mistake. He says it would undo all the work

of the 1995 interim agreement and could lead to violence.

The interim agreement was designed to build trust between Israelis and Palestinians, says Mr Barak. But it was also constructed to strengthen the Palestinians' negotiating position before final status talks, scheduled to last until 1999. The Palestinians should have gained control of large swathes of territory in the West Bank, by the time those talks were in full swing, putting the physical foundations of a Palestinian state in place.

"And not only that," says Mr Shmuel Sandler, political scientist at Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv. "The interim agreement is supposed to give the Palestinians time to build a civil society, to move away from being a revolutionary movement to a democratic one."

"That could all be undone by Netanyahu," says Mr Sandler. "By jumping directly to the final status talks, the interim agreement will be by-passed. The Palestinians will be left with a very weak civil society. It will have no bargaining chips."

The main leverage the Palestinians have always sought is land, vital for realising their aspirations for their own state. Under the terms of the interim agreement, an unspecified amount of land is supposed to be returned to the Palestinians after the completion next year of three Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank. But land is precisely the card Mr Netanyahu and his Likud government have

decided to hold on to tightly. "It is their greatest asset," says Mr Sandler.

This is another reason why Likud and its coalition partners support Mr Netanyahu's idea of going directly to the final status talks. "The coalition knows that, if it gives back land before those talks, it becomes an irreversible decision. That really scares the nationalists," says a senior government official.

The coalition began to understand this - and the implications of implementing the interim agreement - when Mr Netanyahu finally agreed last January to withdraw Israeli troops from Hebron. For Likud, which still believes Hebron and the West Bank is part of "Eretz Israel", the Jewish biblical homeland, that withdrawal was the beginning of the end of Israel's hold on the West Bank and a betrayal of Likud's principles. For the international community, it seemed to represent Mr Netanyahu's commitment to the peace process.

For a few weeks after Hebron there was a hope that some seeds of trust and confidence had been sown between Likud and the Palestinians. But Mr Netanyahu's decision this week on Har Homa and final status talks disabused the Palestinians of that notion as much as it reassured his coalition partners that he was not disowning their principles.

"What he is doing is dictating the terms of the peace process," says Mr Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian chief negotiator. "Netanyahu is creating facts on the

ground before starting the final status talks."

What particularly frustrates the Palestinians is that Mr Netanyahu, as he told Israel Radio yesterday, has drawn up his own maps and territorial boundaries for the final settlement. "This is not a negotiation. It is a fait accompli," says Mr Erekat.

Mr Netanyahu has shifted his ground after Hebron and adopted what some Palestinians believe is a unilateral negotiating position in order to placate the nationalists in his fractious coalition. He is also inherently sceptical, if not opposed, to the Oslo process, as he said during his election campaign last year.

"He never really liked it," says Mr Alexander Lubotzky, a Knesset member of the coalition's Third Way party. "It is not that he does not want peace. He simply does not believe that Oslo is the right framework."

Mr Martin Kramer, a political scientist at Tel Aviv University, says: "Everybody knows that the interim agreement is fraught with difficulties, but it is a process, a mechanism, one created to build confidence. I think Netanyahu believes he has reached an impasse with Oslo because he does not fundamentally believe in it. He fears it gives away too much too early."

The Palestinians will be loath to accept Mr Netanyahu's proposals, believing them to be a ploy, serving to deflect international attention from Har Homa and mollify his own coalition. "We entered the peace talks as unequal partners," says Mr



Erekat. "Netanyahu holds all the cards."

"Netanyahu's plan might crash. If it does, he may be forced to form a national unity government," adds Mr Kramer. "And they can wait a bit longer if Arafat can convince them, and if they refrain from violence," says Mr Kramer.

When in 1994 the top executives of the five big US tobacco companies stood side-by-side before a Congressional subcommittee, raised their right hands, and swore that cigarette smoking was not addictive, it was a memorable moment. The scene attracted derision from those who pointed to the millions of smokers who had tried to quit smoking but failed.

Three years later, one has broken ranks with the rest and come clean. Liggett, the smallest of the five, plans to start labelling its cigarette packs with the warning "Smoking is addictive" - arguably one of the highest steps forward for US anti-tobacco campaigners since health warnings began appearing on cigarette packs in 1966.

Mr Al Gore, the US vice-president, called the move "a historic victory for the American people" and said Liggett had "publicly acknowledged what we have all known for years" about smoking and the behaviour of the tobacco companies.

Liggett agreed to the move as part of a ground-breaking deal with the attorneys-general of 22 states that are suing US cigarette-makers to recover the costs they incur in treating smoking-related illnesses under public-sector healthcare programmes. Subject to court approval, the deal will also settle all present and future claims brought by or on behalf of individual smokers.

Under the deal, Liggett will gain immunity from litigation, but in return it will pay 25 per cent of its dwindling pre-tax profits over the next 25 years into a fund that will be divided among all those winning lawsuits against the industry. It will also acknowledge publicly

Haunted by old flames

Richard Tomkins reports on why a US tobacco company has broken ranks on the dangers of smoking

that smoking causes cancer and other diseases, and that some tobacco marketing was aimed at under-age smokers. But for the attorneys-general, the crown jewel of the settlement is Liggett's agreement to hand over thousands of pages of internal documents that they believe will provide evidence that the industry has engaged in a decades-long conspiracy of silence and deceit over the hazards associated with smoking.

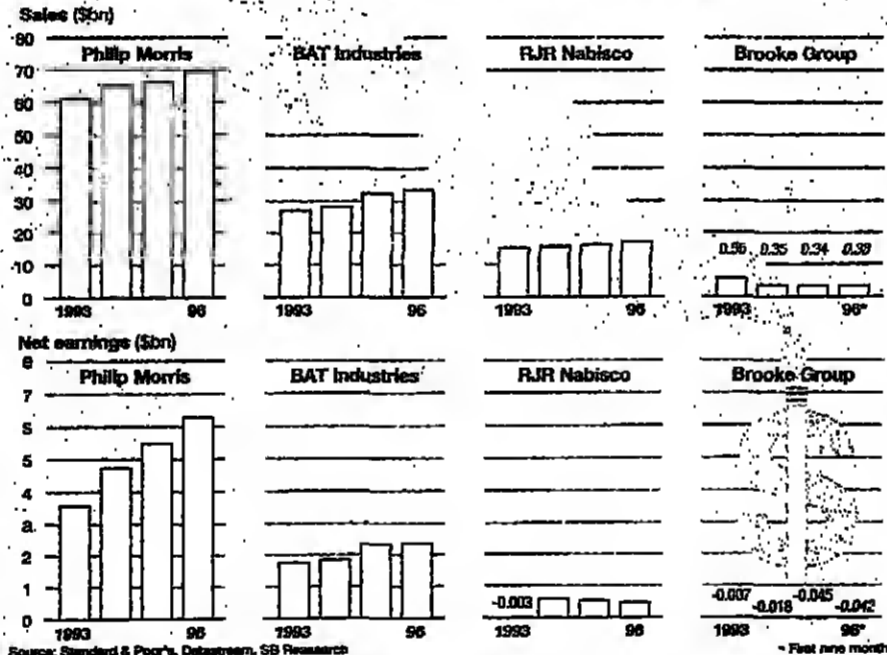
Mr Michael Moore, the Mississippi attorney-general, says: "Never again will Big Tobacco be able to claim innocence with a straight face. The documents will tell the real story behind the industry's lies."

The attorneys-general want the documents not because they may help nail Liggett, the small and ailing maker of Chesterfield and some cut-price brands, but because they believe they will give them the ammunition they need to attack the larger companies: Philip Morris, RJR Nabisco, Brown & Williamson Tobacco - the US arm of Britain's BAT Industries - and, to a lesser extent, Lorillard.

The tobacco companies themselves seemed to give weight to this idea when they dashed into a North Carolina courtroom on Thursday to get a temporary restraining order preventing Liggett from handing over any documents involving discussions with other companies. A full hearing is set for March 31.

Still, analysts are uncon-

Tobacco industry: no smoke without fire?



vinced. The past few years have seen the emergence of several whistle-blowers from the tobacco industry and the publication of thousands of pages of internal documents, and analysts doubt whether the papers held by Liggett even if the courts allow them to be released - will add much to what is already known.

But what about the admission that cigarettes are addictive? Mr Gary Black, an analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein, the Wall Street securities house, doubts whether Liggett will rush to put the warning label on the pack

because of the danger that it could be used against the company by any litigants not covered by this week's deal.

"In addition, Liggett would be pressed to explain when its executives became convinced that smoking was addictive, and could be held liable for fraud for not revealing that knowledge earlier," says Mr Black.

Although tobacco shares fell sharply when the settlement was announced, the declines were not on the same scale as those resulting from earlier industry setbacks - notably the case last

August when a Florida jury awarded \$750,000 (\$471,698) in damages against the industry to a lung cancer patient and his wife. The case is under appeal.

Before that, the tobacco companies had never paid a penny in damages because juries had taken the view that everyone knew the risks associated with smoking, and that those who took up the habit had only themselves to blame. What remains to be seen is whether the Liggett settlement helps change the climate for litigation by exposing tobacco manufacturers

as cynical manipulators of their customers' susceptibilities - or whether juries say they always knew that anyway.

A test could come as early as next month when Mr Norwood Wilner, the Florida trial lawyer who won the \$750,000 verdict last year, brings his next case. In the meantime, the other big question posed by the Liggett deal is why the financier Mr Bennett LeBow, chairman and chief executive of Brooke Group, Liggett's parent, would want to expose his company to such a costly settlement.

Analysis says he had little choice. Liggett, losing market share and facing heavy debt repayments over the next two years, has little or no future as an independent company, but if Mr LeBow were able to engineer a merger between Liggett and another tobacco company, such as RJR Nabisco, he could come out showing a big profit.

Mr LeBow appears to be gambling that his settlement will cause enough billion-dollar lawsuits to go against the industry to frighten a big player, probably RJR Nabisco, into a merger with Liggett. If that happened, the Liggett settlement would provide for the big company's liabilities to be capped at the level of its US tobacco profits - the attraction being that a company such as RJR Nabisco could continue to keep the profits from its international tobacco and food operations.

Mr LeBow, a man with a long record of financial wheeler-dealing, tried to win control of RJR Nabisco in a proxy fight last year, but gave up when it became clear that he would fail. If his vengeance succeeds, it will be in spectacular fashion.

Steeled for a battle

German workers are facing up to increasing job insecurity, says Frederick Stüdemann

The mood among Dortmund steelworkers after this week's announcement of a takeover bid by steelmaker Krupp Hoersch for rival Thyssen resembled that of football supporters whose team is losing.

"Everyone is pretty worked up," said an electrician from Krupp's Westfalen plant, which employs 6,000 and is a prime candidate for closure in any rationalisation of the industry.

"They've realised this time their jobs are on the line. If the bosses and the bankers get their way then the only place in town which will do good business will be the unemployment office."

Like other towns and cities in the Ruhr, Germany's old industrial heartland, Dortmund faces unemployment rates of 20 per cent if worst fears of cuts in the coal and steel industries are met. With unemployment in Germany at record postwar levels, Krupp's proposed takeover has been seen as a further blow to Germany's consensus-based social market economy.

"We don't want things to develop like they did in England or America," says Mr Jan Kobylanski, a shop steward. "There they cracked the unions and look what happened. OK jobs have been created, but at what price? People have to do two or three 'cheap jobs' to make ends meet and live in a hire-and-fire situation."

His views are shared by Bild Zeitung, Germany's biggest selling newspaper and normally no enemy of change. In a typically forthright front-page headline addressed at Krupp's chief executive, it asked: "Herr Cromme, Do You Want To Set Our Country Alight?"

Unlike those in France or Belgium, German workers have held back from direct action in labour disputes. But this week the steelworkers at Krupp and Thyssen downed tools and picketed their factories after the bid was announced.

Last week coalminers marched on Bonn, blocking traffic and blockading the headquarters of the liberal Free Democratic party, Chancellor Kohl's junior coalition partner. And in a protest over jobs in the construction industry, building workers in Berlin stormed the Reichstag.

Workers claim the consensus ways of the past - which they say were an integral part of Germany's attraction as an industrial location - are being sacrificed in favour of newer ideologies.

"They will globalise themselves to death," says Rüdiger Raguse, a works council member at the Westfalen plant. "But I cannot globalise myself. I've got a flat in Dortmund and want to keep on living there."

Krupp's bid for Thyssen has highlighted the growing importance in corporate life of the stock market, which is now dealing with that highly rare German prospect: a hostile bid. While German workers in the past typically blamed their woes on banks and politicians, the steelworkers this week vented their anger at the market.

When workers from the two companies gathered on Thursday to discuss the deal in Dortmund's Westfalenhalle, an imposing monument to past industrial glories, there were calls for a march on the Frankfurt stock exchange. In the event the steelworkers marched back to the Westfalen plant where the works councils voted to return to work.

Their protests had, however, achieved something. Mr Johannes Rau, the premier of North Rhine-Westphalia, brought the two parties together to discuss a joint venture in steel.

Such a settlement would achieve a goal long held by both Krupp and Thyssen of creating a single steel giant. But for the workers at Westfalen it would still probably mean the closure of their plant as the new venture sought to cut capacity.

Even within the Ruhr, however, the importance of coal and steel has diminished. Together they employed 170,000 people, compared with 750,000 30 years ago.

According to Mr Wolfgang Clement, economics minister of North Rhine-Westphalia, coal and steel account for 5 per cent of employment in the state. Concentrated on the Ruhr alone, the figure rises to just 8.6 per cent.

The region has been in a process of restructuring for decades, replacing smokestacks with neatly cultivated landscapes. Thyssen and Mannesmann, Ruhr titans, have successfully diversified into sectors such as telecommunications, and heavy metal is now a low earner.

"If you look at towns like Mülheim and Essen [where Krupp has its headquarters] the restructuring has already been completed," says Mr Heinz Schrupp from the Rhenish-Westphalian Institute for Economic Research. "In reality the Ruhr region is now only an historical term."

The Irish foreign minister tells John Murray Brown about the delights of greyhound racing

One man and his dogs

If there was a sporting award for politicians, it would surely go to Dick Spring, who won three major prizes at fullback for Ireland in the late 1970s and represented his county at hurling and Gaelic football.

Less well known, perhaps, is the Irish foreign minister's love of greyhounds. This began as a means to get to know his North Kerry constituents, when, succeeding his father as MP after returning from the US, with Kristi, his American wife, in 1981.

"The original idea was I should buy a dog, and mix with the lads, the punters," he recalls. "But after a few weeks they were saying 'Jesus, look at your man. It's his first dog and he's winning everything. Typical'."

Spring One, his first dog - a pup he bought for £1,000 - won 15 races in all,

including romping home in the Barry's Tea 700, one of Ireland's biggest races.

Peter Barry, heir to the Cork-based tea business which sponsored the race, was then a minister for Fine Gael, Labour's coalition partner in government. "It was nice to think of £22,000 prize money passing across the cabinet table. I enjoyed that immensely," he jokes.

Spring spent 15 years dedicated to top-class rugby - a passion he says can never be replaced. But he will settle for a night at the dogs, catching the excitement of a 30-second event which sees six galloping dogs pursue a mechanical hare around an oval track.

It also has one advantage over rugby. "When something goes wrong you can always blame the dog," he says. "It's a great moment when

the lights go down and you wait for them to burst from the traps. My kids love it. I had to remind my wife that it's not like an American sport where you shout your head off."

Today he has a half share in two dogs, but work pressure means that he rarely gets trackside.

"You get a call from the trainer and you turn up if you can. During Ireland's recent European Union presidency I didn't make it once. I'm in Dublin four days a week and quite frankly every hour is taken up," he says with feeling during a 20-minute interview squeezed between a cabinet meeting and dinner with the visiting Syrian foreign minister.

He has certainly done his bit for punters at his local Tralee track. Thanks to his endeavours in Dublin, his home town will have a new track plus restaurant and

lounge facilities next month - part of a £1.8m (£1.7m) refurbishment paid by the government, which is a pretty generous given that even on a good night the track attracts little more than 1,000 racers.

And he still cannot resist a political jab when naming his greyhounds. White Ribbon, one of his dogs, is named after the campaign launched by the Irish foreign ministry to call for peace in Northern Ireland.

More controversial is his attitude to greyhound racing's sister sport - horse coursing, which some followers believe to be the purer of the two. Spring remains agnostic, but he embarrassed some of his city-based Labour party colleagues by attending this month's Irish Coursing Cup at Clomanna, County Limerick.

His own explanation -



that he will only support coursing if the dogs are muzzled - was typically sure-footed, even if it does recall Bill Clinton's assertion, when accused of smoking marijuana, that he had not inhaled.

But he is unrepentant on

the general point: "You can't have one without the other. You need the coursing breed for the quality of the greyhounds. I don't think you could sustain the artificial side of the sport, which the track is, without it."

Authorised and Insurance:

● FT Cityline Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Cityline Help Desk on (444 171) 873 4373 for more details.

Legal & General
Investment
Management

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

● FT Cityline Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Cityline Help Desk on 1-44 1711 873 4378 for more details.

[illegible]

• NOTES
Gross: Contractual rate of interest payable, not taking account of the deduction of basic rate income tax.
Net: Rate of interest payable after allowing for deduction of basic rate income tax.
Gross CAGR: Gross rate annualized to take account of compounding of interest paid after that once a year. 'Compounded Annual Rate'.
Int Gr: Frequency at which interest is credited to the account.

مکتبہ اسلامیہ

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Page	Line	Column	Page
1	1	1	1
2	1	1	2
3	1	1	3
4	1	1	4
5	1	1	5
6	1	1	6
7	1	1	7
8	1	1	8
9	1	1	9
10	1	1	10
11	1	1	11
12	1	1	12
13	1	1	13
14	1	1	14
15	1	1	15
16	1	1	16
17	1	1	17
18	1	1	18
19	1	1	19
20	1	1	20
21	1	1	21
22	1	1	22
23	1	1	23
24	1	1	24
25	1	1	25
26	1	1	26
27	1	1	27
28	1	1	28
29	1	1	29
30	1	1	30
31	1	1	31
32	1	1	32
33	1	1	33
34	1	1	34
35	1	1	35
36	1	1	36
37	1	1	37
38	1	1	38
39	1	1	39
40	1	1	40
41	1	1	41
42	1	1	42
43	1	1	43
44	1	1	44
45	1	1	45
46	1	1	46
47	1	1	47
48	1	1	48
49	1	1	49
50	1	1	50
51	1	1	51
52	1	1	52
53	1	1	53
54	1	1	54
55	1	1	55
56	1	1	56
57	1	1	57
58	1	1	58
59	1	1	59
60	1	1	60
61	1	1	61
62	1	1	62
63	1	1	63
64	1	1	64
65	1	1	65
66	1	1	66
67	1	1	67
68	1	1	68
69	1	1	69
70	1	1	70
71	1	1	71
72	1	1	72
73	1	1	73
74	1	1	74
75	1	1	75
76	1	1	76
77	1	1	77
78	1	1	78
79	1	1	79
80	1	1	80
81	1	1	81
82	1	1	82
83	1	1	83
84	1	1	84
85	1	1	85
86	1	1	86
87	1	1	87
88	1	1	88
89	1	1	89
90	1	1	90
91	1	1	91
92	1	1	92
93	1	1	93
94	1	1	94
95	1	1	95
96	1	1	96
97	1	1	97
98	1	1	98
99	1	1	99
100	1	1	100

Mercury Asset Management - Cont.

هكذا من الأصل

INVESTMENT TRENDS - Food

[illegible]

Appendix B

10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

7-24-71

Rank	Name	Points
1	W. J. ...	100
2	...	95
3	...	90
4	...	85
5	...	80
6	...	75
7	...	70
8	...	65
9	...	60
10	...	55
11	...	50
12	...	45
13	...	40
14	...	35
15	...	30
16	...	25
17	...	20
18	...	15
19	...	10
20	...	5

Number of copies of the report	175	27	1991
Number of copies of the report	175	27	1991
Number of copies of the report	175	27	1991

[illegible]

111

[illegible]

WATER ACCOUNT	415	23
NO. 1	77	6

Category	Value	Category	Value	Category	Value
1. Total	100.0	1. Total	100.0	1. Total	100.0
2.	2. ...	...	2. ...	...
3.	3. ...	...	3. ...	...
4.	4. ...	...	4. ...	...
5.	5. ...	...	5. ...	...
6.	6. ...	...	6. ...	...
7.	7. ...	...	7. ...	...
8.	8. ...	...	8. ...	...
9.	9. ...	...	9. ...	...
10.	10. ...	...	10. ...	...
11.	11. ...	...	11. ...	...
12.	12. ...	...	12. ...	...
13.	13. ...	...	13. ...	...
14.	14. ...	...	14. ...	...
15.	15. ...	...	15. ...	...
16.	16. ...	...	16. ...	...
17.	17. ...	...	17. ...	...
18.	18. ...	...	18. ...	...
19.	19. ...	...	19. ...	...
20.	20. ...	...	20. ...	...
21.	21. ...	...	21. ...	...
22.	22. ...	...	22. ...	...
23.	23. ...	...	23. ...	...
24.	24. ...	...	24. ...	...
25.	25. ...	...	25. ...	...
26.	26. ...	...	26. ...	...
27.	27. ...	...	27. ...	...
28.	28. ...	...	28. ...	...
29.	29. ...	...	29. ...	...
30.	30. ...	...	30. ...	...
31.	31. ...	...	31. ...	...
32.	32. ...	...	32. ...	...
33.	33. ...	...	33. ...	...
34.	34. ...	...	34. ...	...
35.	35. ...	...	35. ...	...
36.	36. ...	...	36. ...	...
37.	37. ...	...	37. ...	...
38.	38. ...	...	38. ...	...
39.	39. ...	...	39. ...	...
40.	40. ...	...	40. ...	...
41.	41. ...	...	41. ...	...
42.	42. ...	...	42. ...	...
43.	43. ...	...	43. ...	...
44.	44. ...	...	44. ...	...
45.	45. ...	...	45. ...	...
46.	46. ...	...	46. ...	...
47.	47. ...	...	47. ...	...
48.	48. ...	...	48. ...	...
49.	49. ...	...	49. ...	...
50.	50. ...	...	50. ...	...
51.	51. ...	...	51. ...	...
52.	52. ...	...	52. ...	...
53.	53. ...	...	53. ...	...
54.	54. ...	...	54. ...	...
55.	55. ...	...	55. ...	...
56.	56. ...	...	56. ...	...
57.	57. ...	...	57. ...	...
58.	58. ...	...	58. ...	...
59.	59. ...	...	59. ...	...
60.	60. ...	...	60. ...	...
61.	61. ...	...	61. ...	...
62.	62. ...	...	62. ...	...
63.	63. ...	...	63. ...	...
64.	64. ...	...	64. ...	...
65.	65. ...	...	65. ...	...
66.	66. ...	...	66. ...	...
67.	67. ...	...	67. ...	...
68.	68. ...	...	68. ...	...
69.	69. ...	...	69. ...	...
70.	70. ...	...	70. ...	...
71.	71. ...	...	71. ...	...
72.	72. ...	...	72. ...	...
73.	73. ...	...	73. ...	...
74.	74. ...			

1111

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	52
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	----

GAS DISTRIBUTION

at Oxford	4	22	18
at 22	2	1	1
at 22	2	1	1

[illegible]

WATER ACCOUNT	415	23
NO. 1	77	68

Category	Value	Category	Value	Category	Value
1. Total	100.0	1. Total	100.0	1. Total	100.0
2.	2. ...	...	2. ...	...
3.	3. ...	...	3. ...	...
4.	4. ...	...	4. ...	...
5.	5. ...	...	5. ...	...
6.	6. ...	...	6. ...	...
7.	7. ...	...	7. ...	...
8.	8. ...	...	8. ...	...
9.	9. ...	...	9. ...	...
10.	10. ...	...	10. ...	...
11.	11. ...	...	11. ...	...
12.	12. ...	...	12. ...	...
13.	13. ...	...	13. ...	...
14.	14. ...	...	14. ...	...
15.	15. ...	...	15. ...	...
16.	16. ...	...	16. ...	...
17.	17. ...	...	17. ...	...
18.	18. ...	...	18. ...	...
19.	19. ...	...	19. ...	...
20.	20. ...	...	20. ...	...
21.	21. ...	...	21. ...	...
22.	22. ...	...	22. ...	...
23.	23. ...	...	23. ...	...
24.	24. ...	...	24. ...	...
25.	25. ...	...	25. ...	...
26.	26. ...	...	26. ...	...
27.	27. ...	...	27. ...	...
28.	28. ...	...	28. ...	...
29.	29. ...	...	29. ...	...
30.	30. ...	...	30. ...	...
31.	31. ...	...	31. ...	...
32.	32. ...	...	32. ...	...
33.	33. ...	...	33. ...	...
34.	34. ...	...	34. ...	...
35.	35. ...	...	35. ...	...
36.	36. ...	...	36. ...	...
37.	37. ...	...	37. ...	...
38.	38. ...	...	38. ...	...
39.	39. ...	...	39. ...	...
40.	40. ...	...	40. ...	...
41.	41. ...	...	41. ...	...
42.	42. ...	...	42. ...	...
43.	43. ...	...	43. ...	...
44.	44. ...	...	44. ...	...
45.	45. ...	...	45. ...	...
46.	46. ...	...	46. ...	...
47.	47. ...	...	47. ...	...
48.	48. ...	...	48. ...	...
49.	49. ...	...	49. ...	...
50.	50. ...	...	50. ...	...
51.	51. ...	...	51. ...	...
52.	52. ...	...	52. ...	...
53.	53. ...	...	53. ...	...
54.	54. ...	...	54. ...	...
55.	55. ...	...	55. ...	...
56.	56. ...	...	56. ...	...
57.	57. ...	...	57. ...	...
58.	58. ...	...	58. ...	...
59.	59. ...	...	59. ...	...
60.	60. ...	...	60. ...	...
61.	61. ...	...	61. ...	...
62.	62. ...	...	62. ...	...
63.	63. ...	...	63. ...	...
64.	64. ...	...	64. ...	...
65.	65. ...	...	65. ...	...
66.	66. ...	...	66. ...	...
67.	67. ...	...	67. ...	...
68.	68. ...	...	68. ...	...
69.	69. ...	...	69. ...	...
70.	70. ...	...	70. ...	...
71.	71. ...	...	71. ...	...
72.	72. ...	...	72. ...	...
73.	73. ...	...	73. ...	...
74.	74. ...			

1111

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	52
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	----



Ship's mate

'It was left to the crew of Star Flyer to hang a little floral tribute over the door of the ship's library.'



Balancing act

'It is not at all a philistine culture; there is a respect for learning and professional attainment.'



Man or Superman?

'Take the Olympics out of my career, have I not been successful? I've been very, very successful...'

The getting-by society

It was when the Zairean official blocked my path physically, demanding proof that I had paid the tourism tax, that the situation turned from worrying to farcical. The Zaire Express airliner was refuelling, almost ready to leave Lubumbashi, capital of southern Shaba province, for the comparative calm of Johannesburg.

With the help of a "protocol" - the man bribed to hush the various officials who could complicate the departure of three western journalists - we had already successfully negotiated immigration, ducked a search by soldiers and resisted an attempt to make us pay for showing our vaccination certificates.

Now, a small, belligerent man was standing in front of the exit, claiming we needed a document showing we had paid a regional tourism levy. This in a country most tourists were warned to avoid long before last year's rebel uprising put it on the black-list of all but the most foolhardy travel agents.

It was time for the direct, physical approach. Brushing past the hands grabbing at our bags, ignoring a rising chorus of shouts, we plunged through the metal detector, into the departure lounge and on to the Tarmac. Fifteen minutes later, as the aircraft rose above the savannah, drawing away from the dilapidated city that was once the pride of the Belgians who colonised this vast central African nation, I could sigh with relief.

For the Zaireans left behind, and for too much of sub-Saharan Africa, there is no such easy escape. The anarchy at the airport was typical of an existence where daily survival depends on a willingness to hustle, cajole, threaten and persuade. If an official declares that you have committed a misdemeanour, and demands a *petit cadeau* in exchange for turning a blind eye, there is no higher court of appeal.

Little wonder, then, that the rebel followers of Laurent Kabila, an ageing revolutionary, are now in control of a fifth of the country and are being hailed as liberators. From the capital Kinshasa, where the Zaire river steams like a languid python towards the sea, to the diamond-laced gravel pits of Mbuji-Mayi and colonnaded streets of Lubumbashi, the universal refrain is "il est temps que ça change" (it is time for a change). It tells of ordinary Zaireans wearied by a system in which they are always either predator or prey.

It was 32 years ago that Colonel Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, now stricken by prostate cancer in a Monaco hospital, seized power for his second and final time from the civilian government, filling a vacuum created by the Belgians' hasty withdrawal.

He and his cronies created a concept of the state as kleptocrat, sucking the proceeds from Zaire's extraordinary natural wealth - diamonds, gold, copper, cobalt, uranium, coffee - into foreign bank accounts.

As the state gradually collapsed under the weight of the abuses, unable to pay salaries or provide essential services, he also created a national habit - so



A Hutu refugee helps her daughter with an intravenous drip at a local hospital in Zaire

débrouiller - the French verb meaning "to get by". Zaire today is a nation of 45m *débrouillards*: wheeler-dealers adept at finding a path around apparently insurmountable obstacles.

So *débrouiller* - it is what the portly *maman*, sitting on the muddy lane known as Kinshasa's Wall Street, is doing as she trades bundles of the scorned "prostanes" - the new Zaire notes nicknamed after the president's ailment - for dollars, making her margin on an ever-shifting exchange rate.

It is the skill of the urchin, skipping school to dangle a string of live crickets - a Zairean delicacy - under the noses of shoppers in the capital's teeming market. And it is the talent displayed by the designer suit and wrap-around sunglasses as he sips a *cappuccino* in the Hotel Intercontinental, talking loudly on a mobile phone.

The key, Zaireans have discovered, is to identify and exploit a competitive edge, any edge. For the soldier, often unpaid for months, that means selling his right to bear arms, hence the uniformed men that guard Kinshasa's restaurants and nightclubs, saluting smartly at arriving guests. It also means proffering the threat of violence, and often more than just the threat, at impromptu roadblocks.

For the civil servant, it means bartering access to the decision-makers who can authorise the issuing of a birth certificate, a property deed or a permit to visit a mineral zone. Thus, every bureaucratic procedure becomes a negotiation over

Michela Wrong, in Zaire, meets a people paying a high price for the country's corrupt officialdom

payments for services which are free, theoretically.

The systematic bribe-taking is condoned by Mobutu, the most *débrouillard* of them all. He once remarked: "Everything is for sale, everything is bought in our country. And in this trade, holding any slice of public power constitutes a veritable exchange instrument."

Where bribe-taking does not suffice, juggling several jobs becomes the only alternative. Zaire's dilapidated ministries, universities and hospitals empty at midday as the middle-classes abandon their desks, heading for small businesses, allotments, private clinics and colleges - their real sources of income.

It is in these alternative structures that optimists place their faith. For, while the crumbling of Zaire's state structures may seem cause for despair, embryonic civic organisations are filling the void, the green shoots of a new society sprouting from the ashes of the old.

The Mama Yemo hospital in Kinshasa is an institution where Zairean skill in triumphing over adversity is being channelled for the

good of the community. One of the biggest state hospitals in sub-Saharan Africa, it was once Mobutu's pride and joy. So much so, that he named it after his mother, whose bronze bust stands in one of the courtyards.

Once, Mama Yemo received almost 50 per cent of the health budget. Now, it gets virtually nothing. Officially, a doctor's salary is just 117,000 zaires - less than \$1 a month. In fact, he or she rarely sees even that.

"The situation in this hospital is a resume of the situation in the country as a whole," says Jean Baptiste Sondji, head surgeon. "We get nothing from anybody."

But the picture is not as dark as it first appears. Five years ago, the staff devised a system that would allow them to offer at least a minimum service, bypassing the authorities entirely. In all but the most urgent cases, patients, in theory, entitled to free treatment, are asked to arrive with everything they will need during their stay: surgical thread, anaesthetic, scalpel, gloves, plus an advance fee.

The money is split three ways, on the doctors, equipment and administrative costs. When the patients have no money, it is not

unknown for them to hand over possessions: a television or radio, items that can be resold. "Everyone realised things couldn't go on as they were, and that if we did nothing, no one else would," says Sondji.

As a result of the new arrangement, he earns \$100 a month, which he can live on thanks to his wife's company job. His colleagues make up their shortfall by simultaneously holding jobs in private clinics.

The situation remains far from ideal. Patients often die while waiting to gather the money needed for an operation and surgeons carry out amputations that would have been unnecessary in a western country where constant monitoring is available.

Sondji remains relentlessly upbeat. Something of an amateur fundraiser, he proudly shows visitors the new urology unit, donated by Kinshasa's wealthy Lebanese community.

A new ambulance and operating theatre, gifts from USAID, mean surgeons will no longer have to operate on the pavement, as they sometimes did when the old theatre was overrun.

Sondji is currently in talks with Zaire's petrol companies, negotiating a \$120,000

donation. "I want to spend it on installing mosquito nets, air-conditioning and partitions to separate female patients from male," he says. Whatever sobriquets employees use to describe Mama Yemo, the doctor is proud of the expertise on offer. "When the *mouvances* (members of President Mobutu's entourage) get sick they go to a private clinic for a diagnosis. But when they will often come here. They know they will get better treatment."

The ingenuity being applied in Mama Yemo is taken to its logical extreme in Mbuji-Mayi, capital of east Kasai province. An opposition stronghold, Mbuji-Mayi has been neglected by the authorities, since it was established in the 1980s by ethnic Kasaians, a persecuted minority.

It uses its own money, refusing to recognise the zaire note issued in 1993 by the central bank. But the chasm left by the government has been filled by the diamond-mining company, Société Minière de Bakwanga. Although mining firms traditionally played a paternalistic role in Africa, the extent of the company's involvement in every aspect of daily life is breath-taking.

Even residents who have no connection with the company drink water provided from its plant and use electricity from its turbines. They walk on roads built by it, send their children to its schools and are treated in its hospitals. The company has

opened a tiny university on the outskirts of town.

"We are in an environment where the state does not play its role," says Mukamba Kadiata Nzemba, the company's chief administrator. "Our role is to pro-

duce diamonds. But to do that we need men to work and their families must be cared for. If we didn't do this our population would criticise us. I'm a businessman but I am also a politician."

The company spends 8 per cent of its yearly budget on these facilities. Irritated executives say the extra costs, combined with what was until recently a crippling tax bill, has prevented the company from turning a profit for 10 years.

But Kinshasa could soon pay a high price for decades of neglect. Undeterred by the 80 per cent stake the government holds in the Société, Mukamba declared recently that he was ready to collaborate with the rebels once they captured Mbuji-Mayi.

□ □ □

As the daunting prospect of Mobutu's death and the break-up of the country looms, these examples of Zaireans getting on with their lives, having turned their backs on a discredited state, hold out the best hope for the future.

Zaireans currently regard Kabila as a Messianic figure who will deliver the country from its woes. But if the rebel leader seizes control of the entire country, he will find himself saddled with a huge, unwieldy state apparatus which has a momentum and logic all of its own.

There is the danger that Kabila - or whoever eventually replaces "the Great Helmsman", the title stolen from Mao Zedong - will be sucked into that system.

Decades of despotism have bred sullen passiveness among Zaireans. Complain about an official abuse and the standard response is a resigned shrug of the shoulders and the infuriating: "C'est le Zaire." (That's Zaire for you.) The ingenuity is there to be mined, and until it is, this country at the heart of Africa will be content with the struggle of "getting by".

The ultimate word processor for less than the price of a mouse.

When Parker comes closer to you, you'll find it's the ultimate word processor for less than the price of a mouse. All you need is a Parker Frontier range. Instruments and the price of a PC. Parker's Frontier is the right name for your pen so your work is judged. You belong to Parker territory.

This week's contents and columnists

Arts	VII, VIII	Motoring	XVII
Arts Guide	XX	Perspectives	II-IV
Books	V, VI	Outdoors	XII
Bridge Chess Crossword	XIX	Joe Rogaly	III
Fashion	X	Science	II
Food & Drink	XVI, XVII	Small Businesses	II
Gardening	XII	Sport	IX
How To Spend It	X, XI	Travel	XIII-XV
Lunch with the FT	III	Weekend Investor	XX, XXI



Joe Rogaly
P - for politics
'If Bill Clinton could send Friends of Bill to the senate...'
Page III

True Fiction
Cashing in on music
'I'd already handled the Jethro Tull 2009s and the Mott the Hoople 30-year notes.'
Page XXII

PERSPECTIVES

The Nature of Things

Hale the blazing snowball

Both the loony fringe and scientists are dazzled by the comet's brightness, says Clive Cookson

Before the era of scientific astronomy, this would have been a year of ill omen, as the brightest comet in living memory blazed for months in the night skies. Now we can reassure ourselves that Comet Hale-Bopp is no more than a gigantic dirty snowball from outer space, trailing tails of gas and dust as it swoops through the inner solar system - and enjoy the spectacle from a safe distance.

When Hale-Bopp makes its closest approach to the Earth today it will still be 123m miles away. That is further away from us than the sun (93m miles).

But irrational ideas that comets are agents of doom are not dead yet; indeed the latest technology is helping to revive them. The loonier fringes of the Internet have been buzzing for months with stories that Hale-Bopp has changed course to head for the Earth and/or that a huge alien spacecraft is using the comet as cover for a voyage to explore the solar system. As usual UFOlogists are accusing NASA, the US space agency, of covering up vital evidence in this case pictures that show Hale-Bopp with a mysterious travelling companion.

More traditional apocalyptic voices are also responding. As long ago as December 1996, just after astronomers had first gone on record with statements that Hale-Bopp might put on a brilliant show early in 1997, the FT

received a faxed "world news flash" announcing: "Dazzling comet explosion will shock the whole world by April 1997! There will be a new political leader in Britain when the spectacular comet appears!" According to the release, Sister Marie Gabriel, a "visionary mystic", predicted these events in June 1985 - 10 years before US astronomers Alan Hale and Thomas Bopp discovered the comet that bears their names.

In fact, orthodox scientists were wary about predicting an astronomical show of the century from Hale-Bopp until a couple of months ago, because the brightness of a comet is notoriously unpredictable. They did not want to repeat the embarrassing mistake of 1973 when the much-hyped Comet Kohoutek turned out to be a sad anti-climax. The headline on this column last November expressed the uncertainty: "Climactic comet or April fool fizzle?"

Many FT readers will have seen the answer for themselves. After dark Hale-Bopp is already visible with the naked eye in the



Hale-Bopp comet, the bright light seen over Chautauque Lake in Berns Point, New York

light pollution of London, and in rural areas it shines as brightly as anything in the night sky, except for the moon.

Hale-Bopp will probably continue to brighten until April 1,

its closest approach to the sun (86m miles), when solar heat will be driving off gas and dust most rapidly from the comet's frozen nucleus.

It will then fade gradually over

the following few weeks.

To view Hale-Bopp, it is essential to choose a clear night and highly advisable to choose somewhere well away from urban lighting. Under those conditions,

you cannot miss the comet and its magnificent tail if you look in a north-westerly direction in the evening or in a north-easterly direction in the early morning before dawn. (Although Hale-Bopp is visible throughout the hours of darkness, it dips down to a very low angle above the horizon in the middle of the night.)

If the conditions are not quite right - if, for example, there is still a ghastly orange glow from distant streetlights over the horizon - you may well feel a sense of mild anti-climax as you gaze at Hale-Bopp, and you may wonder why comets struck such awe into your pre-industrial ancestors.

Remember that nights really were darker then, and most people were far more personally aware of the stars and planets in the night sky than we are today. Remember, too, that people had not been "spoiled" by seeing a vast range of photographs and electronic images, moving and still, of heavenly bodies, real and imaginary. Compared with a science fiction movie, a planetarium show or even a good fire-

work display, a real comet could seem like a static splotch of dull white light.

Hale-Bopp and its tail cover such a wide field of view - about the same as two clenched fists held together at arm's length - that the overall effect is best appreciated with the naked eye or a pair of low-magnification binoculars. If you want to record the event for posterity, an ordinary SLR (single lens reflex) camera mounted on a tripod will give good results with fast film and an exposure of a minute or so.

Meanwhile, professional astronomers are focusing powerful telescopes on Hale-Bopp to investigate its detailed construction and composition. The most thoroughly studied comet so far is the famous Halley, which was observed by a fleet of spacecraft on its last visit in 1986. But Hale-Bopp is 10 times more active than Halley at its peak, and spectroscopic analysis has already revealed molecules not previously detected in a comet.

The material in comets is believed to be left over from the formation of the sun and its planets 4.5bn years ago. A vast number of potential comets, the so-called Oort cloud, remains deep frozen in the outer reaches of the solar system. Occasionally a passing star gives one of them a gravitational nudge that propels it towards the sun - converting the dirty snowball into a fiery comet.

Minding Your Own Business

The free card trick to success

Heather Farmbrough on a postcard advertising company hoping to deliver throughout Europe

In 1992, Mimmi Selin came to London from Stockholm, intending to stay for just a few months. Five years later, she has little intention of going home while her postcard advertising business, Cardguide, carries on growing.

The cards can be found in bars and restaurants in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester and Leeds. They look like any other postcard on the front, usually with a striking visual image or a witty slogan. But on the back, taking up no more than a third of the left-hand side, is a company logo or slogan.

Each card is designed by an advertising agency for its client who advertises on the back of the card. Cardguide is paid a fee by the advertising agency to display their client's card for a month in a rack of 18. Customers take the cards for free.

Selin first thought about using postcards for advertising in February 1991 while working for the Swedish agency Riffi in Stockholm as a copywriter. Disillusioned with conventional advertising, she had been looking for a new way to reach the most elusive group of consumers - young, affluent high spenders, who are rarely at home and so difficult to reach with TV advertising. So with the help of a friend, Sanna Heyman, a former Ikea manager and Hennes buyer, Selin came up with the postcard idea.

"We wanted to reach these people in a relaxed atmosphere. That's when advertising is most effective. So we wanted postcards that people would take because they liked them," she says.

The Swedish creative directors they consulted were enthusiastic. Selin's only previous commercial

experience was running her own record company at 17 to sell her boyfriend's records. She sold just 200 and had to close the business. More cautious this time, she kept overheads low - just the telephones and the rent for a small office.

In June 1991, Koteguiden (the Swedish Cardguide) was launched. Selin and Heyman invested no money in the business. They persuaded the printers and couriers who restocked the racks to wait a month for payment until advertising space on the second batch of cards had been sold.

Initially 60 bars and restaurants in Stockholm agreed to stock the racks. Within days they were empty. With the £2,000 profit made from the first month's sales they set up the company as an AB (Swedish limited company). They have refused to borrow any money for the business; everything comes out of cashflow. After just six months, racks went up in Gothenburg; after a couple of years, in Malmö and Lund.

In May 1992, Selin and Heyman decided the next step for the company was expansion overseas and they targeted London. Selin arrived in the UK in November 1992 to set up Cardguide as a separate company with £100,000 borrowed from the Swedish parent. She envisaged establishing the operation, getting it going and then returning to Sweden.

It wasn't hard to find restaurants and bars willing to take the racks - the initial 50 included Bar Italia in Soho, Cibo in Holland Park and the new Fifth Floor restaurant at Harvey Nichols. The advertising agencies were another matter, taking more persuasion than Selin had anticipated.

"I didn't know anyone, whereas in Stockholm everyone knows everyone. I wasn't used to the split between creative and media departments in advertising agencies. For each client, I had to speak to four or five people. I would call and leave messages and the calls were never returned."

However, she persisted and started calling creative directors after their secretaries had gone home to make sure she caught them. Her English was reasonable, but by no means perfect. However, she believes being Swedish was an advantage.

"We are much more direct. I didn't waste time writing letters and so on. Then I was lucky. I called John Hegarty, creative director of Bartle Bogle Hegarty. He knew someone I knew in Sweden and was very friendly. Although it was a while before one of his clients, Levi Jeans, used the cards, his endorsement helped."

The first racks in the UK appeared in November 1992, with only four of the spaces sold. Selin filled the rest with cards specially commissioned from designers, illustrators and photographers. In the newly opened Fifth Floor restaurant at Harvey Nichols, the cards were so popular that the racks had to be filled each day, prompting the store to install a post-box and start selling stamps.

But by the end of the first year, Cardguide was still losing money and had used all the £100,000 borrowed from Sweden. Cardguide, Selin says, there was no question of returning to Sweden though - the idea simply took longer to catch on.

"The English public was very suspicious," Selin recol-



Mimmi Selin: "I was in a store and saw a man putting cards in a rack just like ours. He had taken our idea..."

lects. "They couldn't believe the cards were free." Although many of the initial clients were record companies which wanted to promote new artists and releases, others included Royal Mail, which bought spaces for the whole of the first year. Pretty Polly, Carlton TV, radio companies and drinks manufacturers. The client list gradually grew to include fashion and fragrance companies such as

Bally, Paul Smith and The Gap and now totals 200 companies.

By the end of 1994, UK Cardguide had moved into profit and in the following year, Selin and her three employees moved into larger offices in Soho.

In 1995, racks were established in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Last year Leeds and Manchester were added. Printing and distribution costs are £3,600 a month for

45,000 cards, reaching 90 different venues in London or 55,610 for 95,000 cards in 190 venues in all five UK cities. In the last financial year to March 1996, Cardguide's turnover in England was £500,000 and roughly the same in Sweden. Profits in Sweden were around £115,000 but in England just £20,000. This year just ending turnover in both countries is expected to reach £730,000 and profits are fore-

cast at £200,000-£250,000. Profits have increased in the UK due to opening in Leeds and Manchester. For the year to March 1998, turnover is expected to reach £1m in both countries.

Cardguide's success has inevitably invited competition. In 1996, Selin was in New York, exploring yet another market for Cardguide.

"I was in a store and saw a man putting cards in a rack

just like ours. He had taken our idea - but there was nothing I could do. He was free to put his cards anywhere," she says.

Undeterred, Selin intends to expand into two new European countries and two more UK cities this year. "We haven't decided where exactly," she says, "but my dream is to be in all the major European cities - Brussels, Paris, Munich and so on."

Truth of the Matter / Sidney Brichto

Instructions for a do-it-yourself God

Voltaire said: "If God did not exist, we would have to invent him." This often quoted statement has hindered our perception of a deeper religious truth: if God does exist, we still have to invent him.

Each individual we encounter is our own invention, simply because he or she is, in reality, quite different from our own perception. However well we know our friends, our parents, our spouses and our children they appear differently to others and to themselves. If this variance is true of people we see and touch, how much more must it be true of the invisible presence we call God? The God posited by philosophers, the source of all reality - the prime mover - may be independent of us. But the God to whom we speak is the

God of our own invention. The concept of a moral ruler of the Universe was invented by the Judeo-Christian movement and endorsed by Islam. It has motivated individuals to commitment and to self-sacrifice to achieve its moral objectives. It has led to remarkable achievements in politics, in the arts and sciences. A Promethean ethos born on Olympus and a Hebrew ethic born in Eden combined to make humanity rebellious against nature, and determined to manipulate, control and rule over her. At first, humans believed that this process

was in opposition to the gods. Finally, they convinced themselves that they were fulfilling God's will. "The heavens are the Lord's but the Earth He has given to the children of man." (Psalm 115:16)

Another important revolution was to stop seeing God as an arbitrary despot demanding animal and human sacrifices to satisfy his hunger for power. The prophetic God despises festivals but exults in human justice. Abraham gave God a moral lesson when He proposed to destroy the innocent along with the wicked in Sodom. "Will not the

Judge of all the earth act justly?" At the time of the Hebrew prophets, the Greeks were giving up their belief in gods who raped pretty women. Euripides has Electra declare with deep conviction: "Never more can we believe that there are gods, if impious wrongs triumph over justice."

The Greek gods, like the Hebrew God, were re-invented to promise good people that the wicked would be punished for their wickedness. The subject of theodicy, the vindication of God in spite of the presence of evil, was born when it became apparent that more

often than not it was the good who suffered and the best who suffered most.

The modern Judeo-Christian God is a different invention. The moral but invisible God was too remote and had to be brought down to earth. In the tragedy of Jewish life, he became personified as a God who goes weeping into exile with his people. In Christianity, it is the Son of God or his mother Mary or the saints to whom believers relate. The nature of the gods we have invented will lead to different attitudes and actions. The God of St Francis of Assisi inspired gentleness; while the God of

the Templar Knights was not offended by the rivers of Jewish and Moslem blood his crusader heroes caused to flow.

Of course, the question must be asked: if God is an invention, does the invention exist? Aside from personal revelation or the acceptance of hearsay, we cannot know. On the assumption that God does exist we must still call him a human invention for the reasons I have given.

If we assume that God does not exist, does our invention of him matter? The answer must be "Yes". Martyrs and the victims of

holy wars demonstrate the enormous impact that the invention of God has had. But so, too, do the love of justice and compassion based on the belief that God created men equal, not to mention the countless individual lives which have been, and continue to be, touched, inspired, motivated and consoled by it.

Is it hypocritical to hold to a belief of which we have intellectual doubts because it gives us confidence, hope and a moral framework in which to live? Maybe. Yet I am convinced that the invention of a caring God is the most creative means of

sanctifying each individual life and of giving society a moral purpose.

When I present this thesis, I am asked: "But do you, rabbi, believe in God?" My honest reply must be: "I desperately believe in him, but I am not certain He exists." Believers need to accept that God's existence will only be proved at the end of history. Until then, they have no choice but to act with the faith that their descendants if not themselves will see that God was more than an invention but an inspired vision waiting to be realised.

Rabbi Dr Sidney Brichto is senior vice-president of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues.

PERSPECTIVES



Joe Rogaly

I spy with my little eye something...

... beginning with P. What could it possibly be in a UK election year? Surely not politics

Which would you rather talk about this fine weekend – pornography or the British constitution? Very well, you win. The constitution it will be. We must, however, begin with the other topic. For this week, the Communications Decency Act, which seeks to protect children from porn on the Internet, was challenged in the US Supreme Court. That tells us much about constitutions in general, and the superiority of the American over the British model in particular.

We need not confuse ourselves with the details of the US case. You might protest that the elected congress and president represent the people, so their benign censorship should prevail. You could argue, as does

the other side, that the act infringes the freedom of speech guaranteed by the US constitution. Who is right? Traversed by opposing squads of lawyers, the US system provides clear rules of engagement.

This is not to say that it is without fault. Franklin Roosevelt tried to pack the Supreme Court when, in 1936, the bench ruled that his social legislation was unconstitutional. President Roosevelt won that year's election. A few months later the same judges, in the same court, found in favour of a minimum wage, social security and other bits and pieces of the New Deal.

As you read this, convicted killers who might have been kept alive under earlier US high court decisions await execution. In the 1960s, when others (never

you nor I) were permissive, justice smiled on loose behaviour; today it is more conservative. It desegregated the schools, but has since wobbled on busing. In short, judges in every country are humans. They have principles. It is just that these are never eternal.

Britain, home of the mother of parliaments, has the judges, but not the US system of checks and balances. The government – the executive – decides what to do. The House of Commons usually assents. There is no place to go from there, no written-down charter of rights. If judges seek to intervene, they must invent technicalities, or cite European Union law. British courts have used these devices well. They have built up a case-history based network of administrative

law and, increasingly in recent years, sought to protect individuals from the executive.

When all else fails, British litigants may appeal to the European Convention on Human Rights, the court for which sits in Strasbourg. Alas, this apparently happy arrangement is flawed. It takes on average five or six years to get a hearing. The outgoing Conservative government does its best to ignore unfavourable results. It would be better to adopt the convention as part of British law.

The UK Labour party, which is expected to win the country's election on May 1, has undertaken to do so. Optimists might characterise a British bill of rights as the first page of a written constitution, and ready reference to its paragraphs as the

first step towards a Supreme Court. British voters should not, however, get over-excited. There are at least three ways of building human rights into the law of a country ruled by a sovereign parliament.

The least powerful, adapted from New Zealand, would provide that the bill of rights should be used as a tool of interpretation for the courts, and then only where possible. Next up is the Hong Kong method, which would say that the new rights count for more than existing laws. New legislation would not necessarily be covered, as there would be an escape clause. The strongest protection would be the Canadian charter, which obliges parliament to state openly that particular new statutes are intended to override

specified rights. Labour is expected to take the New Zealand route. It trumpets its constitutional reforms as radical, but they amount to little more than a row of beans. The promise of a parliament for Scotland is something, but the proposed assembly looks more like the Glasgow city council writ large than the legislatures of Illinois or Quebec.

It is the same with Labour plans for modernising local government. We will not have strong local authorities while their budgets are controlled by the central Treasury. As to altering the voting system to proportional representation, I'll believe it when I see it. You could say that these steps will lead to greater things, a quasi-independent Scotland, perhaps, or permanent

coalition government. Even if that is true, the process is likely to be imperceptible.

Meanwhile the next British government will enjoy as much untrammelled executive power as the outgoing one – more if you count Labour's plan to turn the House of Lords into a committee of grateful appointees. How Bill Clinton must envy that one! If he could send Friends of Bill to the senate and keep the friends of his predecessor in a minority, his life would be sweet. He could appoint anyone he liked to sit on the Supreme Court bench, with no danger of rejection. The Communications Decency Act would be safe.

In anticipation of that, we must rush to the Internet to search for something beginning with P. Politics, of course.

Lunch with the FT

Getting down to business with Superman

Pat Butcher meets a perfectionist, Michael Johnson, with a history of tummy trouble

It is a good job that Michael Johnson is not a superstitious man. The last time we shared a meal table, about 4½ years ago, there began a chain of events which led him to food poisoning and failure at the Barcelona Olympics, where he had been outstanding favourite to win gold in the 200 metres.

On that occasion, he was in London on his way to his final pre-Olympic competition in Salamanca, and voicing wariness of foreign food.

I blithely assured him that, in a score of trips to various parts of Spain, I had never encountered any gastric problems. I might as well have spiked his dish there and then. He ate or drank something that was more off than my advice, was violently ill for days, arrived in Barcelona several kilos lighter than the task required, and didn't get past the semi-finals.

As you will know, Johnson rectified matters in salutary fashion in Atlanta last year, becoming the first man in Olympic history to complete the 200m/400m "double", and setting a world record for the shorter distance of 19.32sec, a time which statisticians had reckoned would only be achieved circa 2025.

That pre-Barcelona meal had been in a hotel in Croydon, south London, not the most salubrious of places. But like his 200m record, the location and the man had changed almost beyond recognition when we dined in New York recently. Johnson was in town for the Millrose Games, the oldest continuous indoor meeting in the world. The organisers had chosen a headquarters hotel similar to the one in Croydon, so Johnson's manager had billeted them in his Ivy League "alma mater" venue, the Penn Club on West 44th Street.

The translation from the one-place lycra of his cutaway Superman running suit to a three-piece, woollen pin-stripe that Savile Row would not disavow suited the variable and mahogany splendour of the reception and reading room downstairs. But the decor gave way to a mid-Atlantic anonymity by the 10th floor, so little detracted from Johnson as the centre of the waiters' attentions as we adjourned to eat in a private room next to a reception hosted by his management.

The biggest problem interviewing someone over lunch is, how do they get to eat? Sure enough, I had finished my smoked salmon and salad, and chicken and grill-

led peppers while he had barely had time to lift a fork. Maybe I was subconsciously remembering food poisoning, but he seemed more happy to provide me with an earful than I was him with a mouthful. He was then commenting on TV for the first time, and it carried over to lunch.

One of the regular commentators had remarked afterwards that it was easy to see why Johnson was so good, because he kept asking what he'd done wrong, and how could he rectify it. I mentioned this.

"For my first time, I'm satisfied with it. It was fun, I liked it, and I want to get better at it. I'm not happy with it yet. I think I expected too much out of myself, but I like expecting too much out of myself. I didn't expect to be perfect, but I wanted to be damn close."

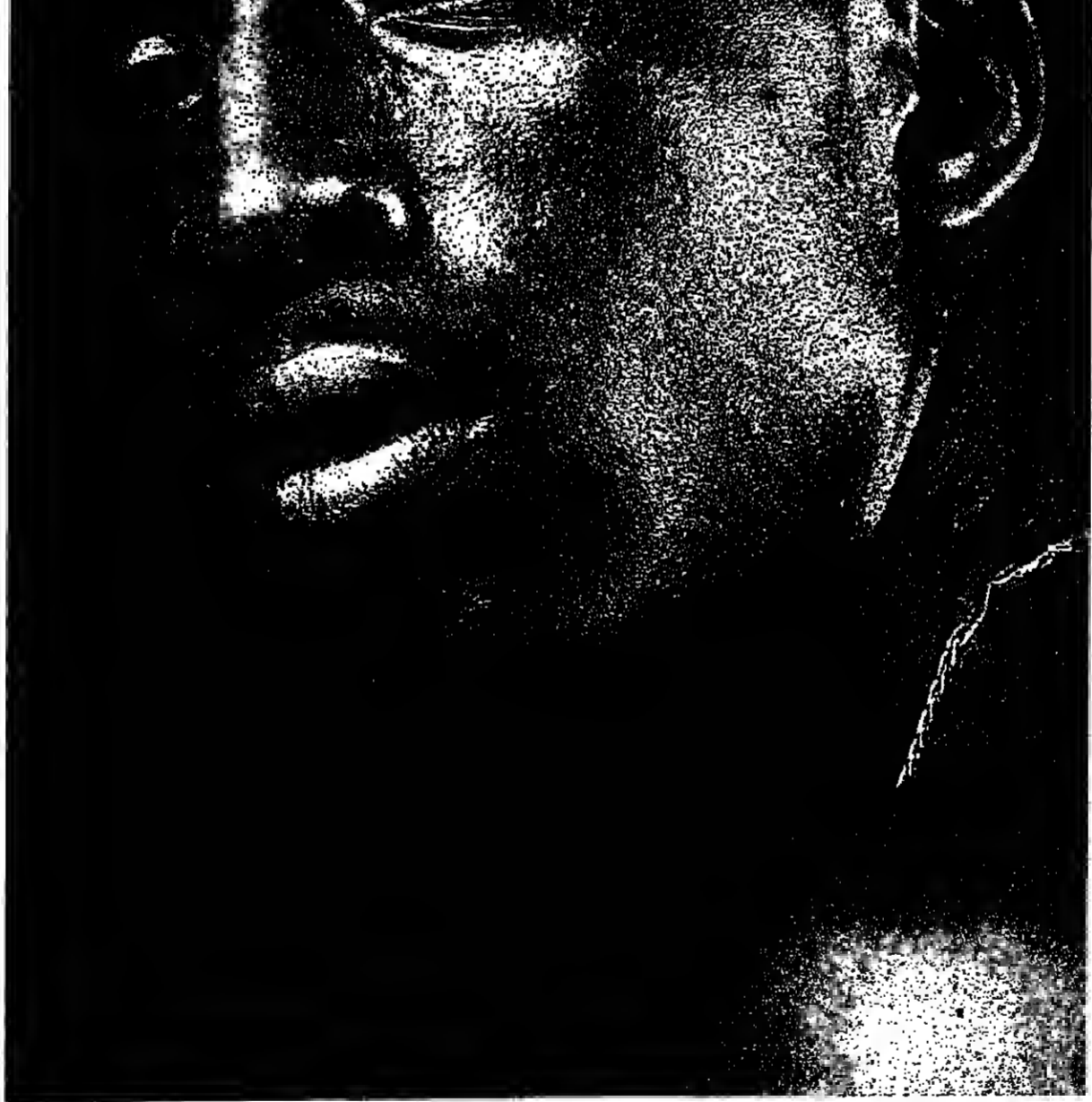
The most obvious question, after his feat in Atlanta last year, was how he was going to prevent the rest of his career, even his life, being an anti-climax.

"I don't have to do that. From an athletics perspective, the Olympics is over, you've got to put that behind you and get on with the next race. It's just like any other person with a job. I enjoy what I do, and my competitive nature won't let me be satisfied with anything other than winning or doing the best that I can. Going into last season, I wasn't thinking that I was training just for the Olympics. I was training for the season, and the Olympics was one event of 20 in the year."

"On the other hand, because it's the Olympics, it's the biggest race of my life. It can't make or break me, but it can do a lot of things for me. But take the Olympics out of my career, have I not been successful? I've been very, very successful, and I've got a lot of fulfilment out of my job. I've still done a lot of good things, accomplished a lot of goals, overcome a lot of obstacles, still made a very good living, and had a very good and rewarding career."

It used to be that Johnson was monosyllabic, seemingly indifferent to the media. That has not completely changed. He doesn't exactly come on like boxing promoter Don King and anguished every stranger with a million-dollar smile, and a spine-wide grin. "Hello, my friend!" But he is more communicative.

This was more like a business lunch, with Johnson discussing promotional strat-



Michael Johnson: "I learned a lot from Carl, because of the mistakes he made"

egy. I elicited one genuine smile, when I asked, apropos his investment in the Dallas Mavericks basketball team, whether he was any good at the game.

He almost laughed. "I'm horrible at basketball. I've never played. But I do enjoy being part of the decision-making team, especially since it's another sport. Well, put it this way, I offer my opinion, whether they take it or not is a different matter. I get to about half of their home games, and one thing you can say about the NBA, it's a well marketed, and it's a great investment. I mean, the city builds the arena, and the owners pick up the profit. It's a great arrangement."

If he couldn't play basketball, I observed that the Olympic skier, Picabo Street, is part of the same management group, and I hoped that she wasn't going to tempt him on to skis.

"I did promise her last

year that I'd try it, but after she got injured I thought I'd put it off for about 10 years."

His post-Olympic book, *Slaying The Dragon* (Piatkus Press, £10.99), firmly aimed at the US self-help market, was a welcome change from the usual turgid athlete bio. But the criticism of Carl Lewis' off-track antics ("fashion designing and pop singing", "lack of restraint and humility") did not chime with the rest of the volume. Johnson disagreed.

"It was right in line from my perspective. First of all, I couldn't write a bio about my life in track without speaking about Carl. It would be a glaring omission, and people would know that I left it out to avoid controversy, and I don't avoid controversy. The particular chapter I'm talking about Carl is about learning things from people."

"Most of the time, people think you only learn from watching the good things

people do, or watching someone succeed at something. I learned a lot from Carl, because of the mistakes he made. It's my opinion that he could have done a lot more for the sport than he did, but because of his selfishness – and that's not what I said in the book, but it's the way I feel – he didn't help the sport, and he didn't help himself."

A bleeper went off somewhere under his jacket, sending another forkful of food back to the plate uneaten as he consulted the offending machine. He was more likely to starve than succumb to food poisoning this time.

Still intrigued that he didn't want to try something different after being so dominant in his events, I essayed suggestions about hurdles, shorter races, longer races. But no, he's sticking with what he knows.

"I think I can still take a little off the 200 record, and

a lot off the 400 record." He is going head-to-head at 150m with Donovan Bailey, the fastest man over 100m, in June.

There was a slight edge as he repeated a mantra I had heard given to an assembly of journalists earlier.

"This is what I do. This is what I'm good at. It's like your job. It's not about training for four years for the Olympics, and it comes along, and it's like Christmas, and it's over. It's not like that. Every race is exciting, but at the end of the day, it's a job. Just like yours."

There was an air of finality about that. He looked at me quizzically, stood up, shook hands, and left almost as abruptly as when he streaks out of those starting blocks. There was just one question left. If mine was a job just like his, how come a sportswear company doesn't pay me \$6m (plus bonuses) for the next three years?

Dispatches

A racing uncertainty

John Ridding gives odds on Hong Kong's other religion

As the punters placed their final bets, the graftbusters swooped. Agents of Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption sealed off the weighing room at the Sha Tin track and hauled away jockeys, trainers and a dozen other suspects for questioning about race fixing and illegal bookmaking. The raid last Sunday reverberated around the colony, dominating the press and revealing the power of racing in horse-mad Hong Kong.

Since a race track was clawed back from the mosquito-infested marshes of Happy Valley some 150 years ago, racing has become the territory's unofficial religion. Heads bowed, in prayer-like study of tip sheets, trackside crowds search for inspiration on race days. High above in the corporate boxes, Hong Kong's elite looks down on the vivid green turf. Add up the wagers taken by the Jockey Club and the total should reach more than HK\$90bn this year – about the sum bet on all the horses on all the courses in the US.

With its mix of money, speed and social classes, Chinese gambling and colonial gentility, the club is a concentrate of the community. Like that community, the club is racing headlong to the end of British sovereignty. And more than any other institution it will reveal whether Hong Kong and its culture can clear the looming hurdle.

Despite Sunday's scandal, the Jockey Club has steered a steady course to the transition, shedding its colonial image and its stuffy British past. It has reorganised the stewards who guide the club, dropped "royal" from its title and, last year, appointed Lawrence Wong as its first ethnic Chinese chief executive.

The former Ford executive had only been to the races twice before his new job – both times in Detroit. He talks with a soft American accent, of focus groups and how the client is king. In style and strategy, Wong is a world apart from the stuffy starched British generals who previously held the reins. But in many ways he is a fitting choice. Boro in China, he spent part of his childhood near the Happy Valley course before heading for Taiwan, the US and back to Taiwan where he ran Ford's operations.

"I am making a circular journey," he says. "I have taken the long route back." The way he sees it, he will return to the mainland with Hong Kong. It is a moving thought, he believes, for the Chinese diaspora. "This is a historic time. I think all Chinese support the idea of one China and the motherland."

Change has rippled further round the top ranks of the club. As smooth as a jockey's silks, stewards have been shuffled to mark the arrival of the territory's new elite. The seat, held once and always by a taipan from Jardine Matheson, the grandest of Hong Kong's founding trading houses, was taken in 1994 by Larry Yung, the son of China's vice-president and the head of Citic Pacific, the

biggest mainland-backed company in Hong Kong.

Yung has a passion for horses and has made his mark as an owner, with this year's Derby among his prizes. The other stewards read like a list of Who's Who in Hong Kong with legislators, lawyers and government officials prominent.

The stewards steer the club in a way that mirrors the governance of Hong Kong. They are selected by 200 voting members of the club, who are approved by the stewards. It is cosy, and none too democratic. But it allows quick and decisive management and smacks of the strong executive-led administration that is championed by Tung Chee-bwa, the shipping tycoon who takes over in July from Chris Patten, the last colonial governor.

Just like the territory's government, the club and its stewards sit atop a treasure chest. A monopoly on gambling in Hong Kong is as lucrative as it sounds and, although a non-profit organisation, the surplus from its operations, after a hefty tax bill, totalled almost HK\$2bn last year.

Just like the government, the club and its stewards sit atop a treasure chest

A large chunk of the balance goes to the Jockey Club Charities Trust, the territory's largest benefactor and financier of hospitals, colleges and parks. This has helped secure popular affection, but it might also prompt concern. The honey pot could appeal to cash-strapped cadres, while lack of accountability fills some with unease. "It is a familiar story in Hong Kong," says a Democratic party member. "A powerful institution, vulnerable because it lacks transparency or democratic credentials."

Integrity is the top priority, Wong believes. As for China, money from the club's coffers is meant for Hong Kong. It came from the territory and will be spent there, he says.

Perhaps more important to the club and its survival is the influence it will have in China. For the moment that influence is limited. Gambling, after all, remains illegal north of the border – even if cash prizes for "guessing the winner" make a mockery of the pretence at China's multiplying race meetings. But at the track in Guangzhou, the best in China, computer systems have been installed with the help of the jockey club. Guidance from Hong Kong is also sought in Beijing and Shanghai which were once, in the 1930s, among the world's grandest courses.

It is early days to predict the return of former glories but the potential is vast. In spite of Sunday's stumble, the smart money must be on the rise of racing on the mainland rather than a fall in Hong Kong.

BOOKS

Bright morning of liberalism

A.C. Grayling admires high quality arguments about morality and civilised life

Imagine being present at a debate in the Athenians' agora at some moment in classical antiquity, when that intelligent people lived under Solon's laws and were engaged in producing works of imperishable literature and philosophy through the beautifully supplied medium of their expressive language. One would be witnessing high quality argument about matters of the first importance for civilised life, argument with the power to change one's mind about urgent questions of morality, government and law. Discussion in the agora, and among the trees of the Academy where Plato taught, and the Lyceum's portico where Aristotle strolled as he lectured, shaped a civilisation which in many essentials endures to this day, and is now well into the third millennium of its history.

It is no exaggeration to say that reading Dworkin is like witnessing such debate. High quality argument about matters of the first importance to civilised life: this is exactly what the essays in his lucid, sane, liberal-

minded book offer. The greater part of the book is devoted to cases involving those clauses of the Constitution of the United States of America which together form a bill of rights (the first few Amendments, together with others added after the Civil War), and in particular to the "moral reading" of these provisions. Dworkin aims to show that interpretation of them by the Supreme Court expresses tacit moral judgments about what they mean and require; that this is as it should be; and that this is not anti-democratic, as many opponents argue.

His case is illustrated by discussion of crucial recent wrangles in the US over abortion, euthanasia, pornography, academic freedom, and appointments to the Supreme Court bench. Because the US represents

the greatest experiment in constitutional democracy ever attempted, these questions are immensely important, and Dworkin's treatment of them is profound and influential.

A "moral reading" of a constitution proposes that its clauses be interpreted on the understanding that they embody moral principles of political decency and justice. The fact that observers are able to classify appointees to the Supreme Court as "liberal" or "conservative" shows that questions of value go right to the heart of constitutional law; and in deciding what the Constitution requires or allows in difficult cases, the judges demonstrate moral judgment in action. Yet judges and commentators dislike admitting that constitutional interpretation is moral in character. Unsatisfactorily, they try to

explain their practice as realising the "historical" character of the Constitution, or its "structure". The confusion is important because it bears on whether the Constitution evolves through interpretation, or requires reform, or should be left alone.

In Dworkin's view, the US Constitution expresses commitments to specifiable ideals: that all citizens must have equal moral and political status, that all must be treated with equal concern, and that freedoms indispensable to these ends must be respected. Interpreting the Constitution, whether in this or alternative

ways, depends on understanding the history and language of the Constitution, which in turn shows that judges' interpretative discretion is not, as Macaulay famously remarked, a matter of "all sail and no anchor", for it reveals an important pair of constraints: judges have to respect the Constitution's integrity - decisions in any one case must be consistent with the tenor of the Constitution as a whole - and they have to respect the intentions of its framers.

These points show that a moral reading of the Constitution does not imply absolute power in the hands of judges. But opponents can still argue that such a reading is anti-democratic, because it leaves final Constitutional choices with judges rather than the popular will. Dworkin argues that this criticism is mistaken.

for it presupposes that democracy is merely majoritarianism - that is, the view that political outcomes must always conform to majority will. Rather, he argues, democracy should be seen as consisting in the creation and maintenance of political institutions which treat all citizens with equal concern and respect. This indeed involves majoritarian procedures, for example in elections; but they command assent because the equal-concern conditions govern them - so that, for example, they truly respect minority interests.

Dworkin's argument embraces conceptions of liberty, equality and community in ways that, he says, are true to the spirit of the US Constitution. "First constructed in the bright morning of liberal thought", the argument's liberal tenor pervades the partic-

ular problems Dworkin considers in the main body of the book - abortion, race, pornography and the others - and does so again in the closing chapter where, in a discussion of special interest to British readers, he argues eloquently for adoption into British law of a Bill of Rights.

Once a "fortress for freedom", Britain now lags far behind the US and Europe in failing to have individual constitutional rights written into its fundamental law. The freedoms of British citizens are enjoyed at the whim of parliament, which the courts are powerless to constrain. There is a simple solution: it is to incorporate into British law the European Convention on Human Rights, to which the UK is already a signatory. Currently anyone seeking the Convention's protection has the long, costly task of resorting to the European Court, where Britain has been twice as often arraigned, and more often found wanting, than any other European country. The case is unanswerable, and Dworkin does a great service in restating it so forcibly.

FREEDOM'S LAW

Ronald Dworkin
Oxford University Press £30, 427 pages

Time travel at its best

Freeman Dyson, who is a science professor at Princeton, believes that in the next 100 years we will probably see human settlements on the Moon and on a few local asteroids. Mars, too, perhaps. Then, large-scale emigration from Earth will commence.

"Within 1,000 years," says Dyson, "our descendants may be so widely dispersed that no central authority will be able to regulate their activities or even be aware of their existence. ... Our one species will become many."

He's right, I reckon. So let us blow a raspberry at those who claim that the age of travel is dead, and that travel writing is moribund. What they mean is that the age of earthly exploration is almost at a close. Our travels on the other hand, have hardly even started.

Anyway, travel writing is as much to do with mental and psychological exploration as with anything. For this reason, travel writing is only now starting to evolve. Rory MacLean, for example, is a young writer who - even before the era of Martian settlements - is expanding the boundaries of travel writing by trampling the borders between fact and fiction.

His first book, *Stalin's Nose*, was much admired. John le Carré called it "crazy, charming, a delight". Jan Morris found it "a thing of beauty" (though what does she not?). MacLean's second book, *The Oatmeal Ark*, burlesques his reputation while adding, happily, to the literature on Canada.

It only sounds complicated. A west-coast Canadian, Beagan Gillean (the author's alter ego) takes himself and his inheritance, a trunkful of family papers - letters, diaries, old ferry tickets, all sorts of bits and

pieces - back to the Hebridean island whence his great-grandfather, Hector, had emigrated to Canada in the early 19th century, as part of the tide of humanity that fled Scotland after the English sword had hatched the clans and crushed the Highlanders' spirit.

Once on his Hebridean island, Beagan/MacLean decides to retrace the watery path of his ancestors' travels. So he crosses the Atlantic on the Quebec-bound Global Trader, just as Hector had sailed west in the home-built Good Intent. From Quebec, travelling mainly by river and lake as the early settlers did, he crosses to the

THE OATMEAL ARK: FROM THE WESTERN ISLES TO A PROMISED SEA
by Rory MacLean
HarperCollins £16.99, 337 pages

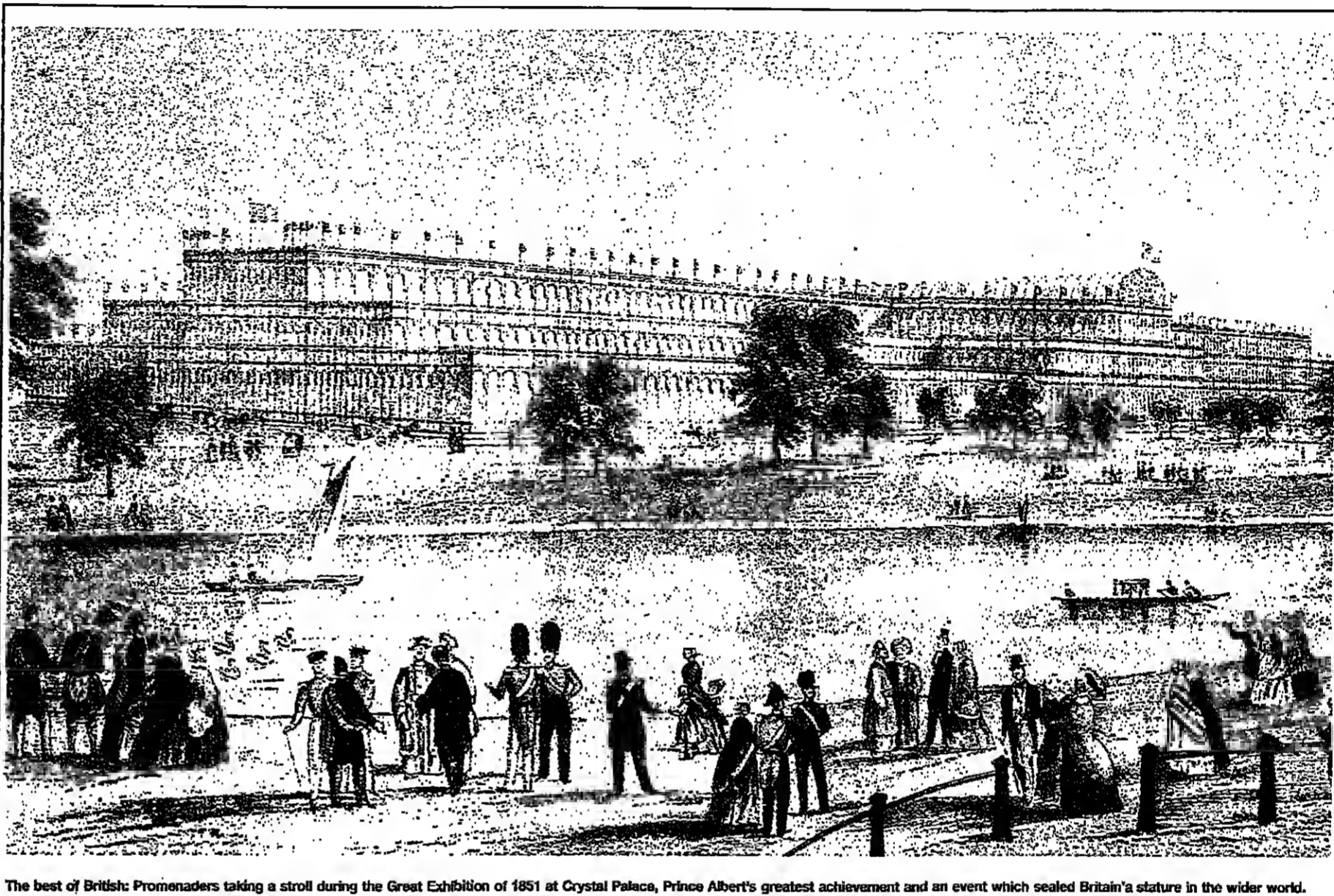
Pacific coast - accompanied by Hector's ghost and by the ghosts of Hector's sons, Jamie and Zachary, and of Beagan's father, Sandy.

The ghosts talk. And Beagan/MacLean's narrative dips cleverly in and out of the old family diaries, cross-cutting back and forth from the earlier times to the present day with consummate skill.

Sounds complicated, but MacLean is so polished, so clever, so imaginative, so artful and so innovative that the tricky-sounding framework of *The Oatmeal Ark's* construction never crashes down upon him. Utterly the reverse. Everything is as clear as gin. We are taken deep inside MacLean's head: a remarkable, beguiling journey.

Imagine what he'd do with Mars.

Michael Thompson-Noel



The best of British: Promenaders taking a stroll during the Great Exhibition of 1851 at Crystal Palace, Prince Albert's greatest achievement and an event which sealed Britain's stature in the wider world.

The man who would be king

Prince Albert's influence far exceeded his position as consort, writes Richard Donkin

Visitors to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, the favourite residence of Queen Victoria, might be surprised to see the full-bodied nudes depicted in a large oil painting occupying the whole of one wall in Prince Albert's bathroom.

The painting, bought by Albert, shows Omphale, the mythical Queen of Lydia, in the clutches of Hercules whom she kept to perform domestic duties, including, as the picture leaves no doubt, a degree of personal servitude.

The painting, concludes Stanley Weintraub in his new biography, is a clear confirmation that the Queen

and her Prince were anything but prudish, particularly when it came to art. But their shared love of fleshy canvases was only part of a mutual attraction which confounded the suspicions of royal advisers and politicians who had tried to deflect the young queen from pursuing an attachment to a German prince from the minor state of Coburg.

Albert was more than merely a loyal and supportive companion: he soon became the dominant partner working closely with the Queen on affairs of the state. His life had many parallels with that of Prince Charles today. Both princes needed

to fashion a role for themselves while living in the shadow of a reigning monarch. The big difference is that Charles can expect to reign one day, though it is

likely to be at a time that most men of similar age will be drawing their pensions.

Albert pursued interests in farming - he was a champion pig breeder - with the same enthusiasm that Prince Charles has applied to his love of gardening - and

attracted the same kind of media contempt. Both princes shared an interest in architecture and a mutual suspicion of architects. Albert employed a builder to oversee the design and construction of the new house at Osborne.

Both, also, enjoyed hunting although Albert arguably attracted greater controversy for his shooting exploits which on one occasion, during a return visit to Coburg, involved what the author described as a "German liquidation" of deer where the targets were herded into an enclosure and shot en masse. Albert was aware of the moral dilemma in such acts - he confessed as much to his stepmother - but his need to hunt was driven by compulsion.

In spite of these public relations disasters that were widely reported in the British press and mercilessly lampooned in Punch, Albert slowly began to attract the grudging respect of politicians although he was prob-

bly never fully accepted by English society.

While he never spoke English with anything but a German accent and privately spoke German with his wife, he was wholly committed to his adoptive country, instinctively a liberal. Albert's forays into politics and support of Sir Robert Peel's struggle to repeal the corn laws included a controversial appearance in the gallery of the House of Commons, a gesture which made him few friends among the landed gentry.

Even though he never again went to the House, the Prince continued to promote reformist causes, including standing in a bitterly fought election contest for the Chancellorship of Cambridge University. Albert was chosen as a figurehead by those who wanted to free a theology and classics obsessed Oxbridge from academic stagnation and to promote the study of science and literature.

Just as Prince Charles has proved a useful channel for

those who seek to circumvent establishment orthodoxy, Albert often found himself in the company of scientific revolutionaries seeking to overturn conventional theological theory. Perhaps his greatest achievement was the creation of the Great Exhibition and Crystal Palace which sealed Britain's stature in the wider world. Arising from that success was the purchase and creation of the Kensington complex of museums and colleges, described at the time as the Albertopolis.

Weintraub's enriching portrait has succeeded in transforming the hitherto one-dimensional appreciation of Albert as a stiff and formal individual who brought the nation Christmas trees and pocket watch chains. Here was a great Victorian whose influence far exceeded his position as consort to the Queen and deservedly earned Disraeli's recognition that he had governed England for 21 years "with more wisdom and energy" than any previous king.

Opening up down under

Australia used to be a very protectionist country. Paul Keating was one of the men most responsible for opening it up to the wider world. As treasurer for eight years in the 1980s, he deregulated the financial system, let in foreign banks, floated the Australian dollar, and steadily cut tariffs. In cooperation with the trades unions, he also presided over a fairly successful incomes policy which substituted tax cuts for large pay increases.

As prime minister for nearly four years in the early 1990s, he helped open up Australia to Asia. Yet his premiership was not as happy as his period at the treasury, and ultimately his party was voted out of office. Keating was not an especially effective prime minister largely because he was made to wait too long before taking over. Bob Hawke, the premier throughout Keating's stint at the treasury, had promised that he would make way for Keating, the younger man, yet he repeatedly reneged on his word. Eventually Keating challenged Hawke for the leadership: he lost the first time, but won a few months later. By the time he became prime minister, however, he

had done most of what he wanted to do. The economy had been basically reformed, and, as Keating discovered, the only thing a prime minister can do which other ministers can not, is to reach out into the higher realms of foreign affairs.

There were defects, too. John Edwards records that Keating had a tendency to hide when ministers came to consult, or badger him. Yet in the end, the Australian electorate simply decided that the Labour Party had been in power too long.

Edwards was a friend of Keating and an economic adviser during his premiership. Because of Australia's history of protectionism and near isolationism, I think he underestimates the extent to which the outside world was

interested in what was happening. But the book has three main virtues. The first is that it shows how tough Australian politics can be. I had not realised the strength of religious feeling both across and within the parties. Sometimes the catholic/protestant divisions sound almost like Northern Ireland. The second is that it makes no attempt to play down the strength of the language. This is pity, to put it mildly. When he was leader of the opposition, John Hewson would mutter across the chamber at prime minister's question time "You're a loser, Keating. You're a loser" rather than Australian slip-finders are said to seek to intimidate English businessmen.

The final merit is that this really is *The Inside Story*. Edwards has seen practically all the papers as well as taken part in huge numbers of discussions. It is as if the whole of the recent history of relations between the British Treasury, 10 Downing Street and the Bank of England were revealed in book form.

Malcolm Rutherford

- New Publications**
- Profiles of science and technology in Australia, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, South Africa**
- A profile on Russia will be available later this year.
 - Published in association with the DTI, these books (averaging 70 pages) give a detailed picture of the science, engineering and technology system and resources in each country. They enable you to grasp quickly the size, capability and strengths of the scientific resource.
 - explain scientific strategy and priorities
 - provide easy, up-to-date comparisons on research spending and summarise international links
 - provide strategic guidance for science-based business
 - give contact details for key ministries, funding bodies, laboratories and universities
- A guide to the governmental organization of science and technology in Britain** (102 pages)
- describes the publicly-funded research and development system in Britain
 - makes responsibilities and funding for UK R&D easy to understand
 - uses simple diagrams to explain the organization of key government departments
 - provides concise descriptions of over 350 organizations
 - gives contact details for laboratories, research councils, learned societies, etc.
- All these publications are available from:
- Breese Ltd, Breese House, Albert Close, Whitefield, Manchester M45 6BE. Telephone: 0161-796 3600
Fax: 0161-796 3700 E-mail: 100864.330@compuserve.com
Price: £16 per copy including postage and packing (within the UK). For overseas orders £20 per copy including postage and packing. Cheques should be made payable to Breese Ltd. Please quote reference FT71 when ordering.



BLACKWELL'S BUSINESS CHOICE

Promoting Prosperity
A Business Agenda for Britain
Vintage 0099747618
Pbk. £8.99

Far reaching and challenging, *Promoting Prosperity* is certain to set the agenda for British Business now and into the twenty-first century.

The Perfect Business Series
Various Authors
Arrow Business Books
Hbk. £10.99 each

Written by experts in their fields, the Perfect series are handy pocket guides covering all aspects of business. During March buy 2 for £10 exclusively from Blackwell's Bookshops.

The Pocket Management Collection
Various Authors
Economist Books
Hbk. £10.99 each

Practical and concise guides to management issues such as technology, strategy and negotiating. During April buy 2 Pocket books from the promoted list and get *Pocket Britain* in Figures FREE.

These and other business books are available from your nearest Blackwell's Bookshop or by Mail Order from Blackwell's Extra, 90 Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BU. Tel: (01865) 752732 Fax: (01865) 261655 Internet: <http://www.blackwell.co.uk/bookshop/>

BLACKWELL'S BOOKSHOPS

ARTS

The simplest ideas are often the best. The National Gallery has a clutch of paintings by Monet, a dozen in all covering his career from 1869, when he was 29, with the boats and bathers at La Grenouillère, to the shimmering near-abstracts of the water-lilies of 1919. And what could have seemed more obvious than to bring them together for a while with all the other Monets in public hands in London, the three from the Tate and three more from the Courtauld? And why not ask around to see if there are any in private hands it might be possible to borrow? Here are another seven.

Once mooted, the only surprise is that it hadn't been thought of long ago. The nominal excuse is that for the next four years all continental works after 1900 are to hang at the Tate; we can only ask who might be next for the treatment. After all, it has all the advantages - minimal transport costs and insurance; a focus upon permanent collections that we all too readily take for granted; the celebration of both the generosity of benefactors and the presence of curators; the odd private surprise to lighten the enjoyment of the long familiar; at a total of 25, a perfectly reasonable number for an exhibition.

There is no better painter of landscape under snow than Monet, and this little exhibition holds two prime and exquisitely beautiful examples. One, "Lavacourt under Snow", dated 1881 but more probably painted during the severe winter of 1879-80, is among the most familiar of them all, for it was the very first Monet to be acquired for the National Gallery, by the Lane Bequest in 1917. In 1906, when it was first available, the trustees made clear they would not accept it even as a gift.

With its hoar to one side, poking out between banks of opalescent paint, bluish for the shadow and glowing pink for the winter sunshine, it looks forward to the pure, painterly, poetical simplicity of the "Nymphs" of his later years. On the other side, its rows of cottages and scrubby trees oddly anticipate Van Gogh's, who had hardly yet picked up his brush. At Avers, some nine years later, familiar as it is, nothing could be more beautiful, and it is all done, not by linear description or close following of form and detail, but by association somehow fused in the paint. Here is the paint as paint, and yet we know that place, those



Purple water-lilies on their dark brown pool, 1917: one of Monet's paintings in private hands to join the National Gallery exhibition

Reflections on Monet

William Packer reviews a few choice works by this magical, mysterious artist

trees, that stream, and feel that cold. It is a kind of white magic, witchcraft. And this magic fills the two rooms at Trafalgar Square currently given to his work. We start with two youthful paintings, a rather clumsy view along the bay at Sainte-Adresse on the Normandy coast (1864) and some apples, grapes and pears on a white cloth (1867), strongly lit and firmly modelled, looking back to Courbet and Chardin. But then, from that still-life to the next painting here, those bathers

at La Grenouillère, the creative distance travelled in two short years seems greater than from thereon to the very end. While we might wish to hilt into that succulent pear, we can hardly claim to see foreshadowed in the handling of its firm flesh those ambiguous yet palpable evocations of light and space, depth, reflection and recession, of the water-lily paintings of Monet's old age. But in the shady dappled water at La Grenouillère we can, and in every single work

thereafter. For all the obvious differences, there they are, after their fashion, alike in the crowded harbour of Le Havre (1873) and along the golden autumn river-bank at Argenteuil (1873). We find them in the subtle greys and pinks and violets of that second lovely snow scene, one of the private surprises, again at Argenteuil (1875), depth, reflection and recession, of the smoke-filled canopy of the Gare St-Lazare (1877).

In the broad simplicity of its handling and rich confection of tone and colour, the

connection may be obvious enough between a hay-stack in a snowy field at sunset (1891) and some purple water-lilies on their dark brown pool (1917) - two more in private hands. But how intriguing to see the connection made no less clear in the Courtauld's vase of flowers (1882), and in the brown, blue and purple shadows of the Queen Mother's superb rocky hillside in the valley of the Creuse (1889).

Does one, should one, have a favourite? Hard to say. The Creuse; the snow; the purple

lilies; those happy bathers? But whichever, Monet always comes back to us, no matter how much we might dismiss him for his familiarity and seductive facility. He is the purest, most immediate and direct of painters, and at once the most mysterious. An image, a thought, a suggestion might seem at first to do it, but he holds us in the paint.

London's Monets: The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square WC2, until May 5; sponsored by Merrill Lynch.

Television/Christopher Dunkley

Invasion of the The Hive

You have not been watching *Dark Skies* on Channel 4 on Monday nights? You'd like to start but feel that missing the first ten episodes might be a bit of a drawback? No problems, ten episodes scarcely get you beyond the introduction. There are 19 episodes in this opening season, and they don't take the plot beyond the 1960s. You thought *Our Friends In The North* was your television drama? Epic scheme, *Dark Skies* has plans for further seasons following the story through the 1970s, '80s and '90s. It may never end.

Basically this is an "Alien Take Over The Planet" plot, but with a twist. If only we had kept our wits about us, we (well, those of us who lived through the 1960s) could have realised what was going on because it turns out that virtually all the major news events - from the Cuban missile crisis to the Kennedy assassination, from Howard Hughes's confinement in a Las Vegas hotel suite to the Alaskan earthquake of 1964 - were, in one way or another, the responsibility of The Hive.

And The Hive? That is the collective name for the weird thingummyjigs which take over human bodies, rather as those pods did in Don Siegel's splendid but scary 1956 movie *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*. The eerie thing is that, outwardly, the human hosts still look exactly the same. Of course, this being 1997, with Ridley Scott having made *Alien* in 1979, and James Cameron *Aliens* in 1986, such things now have to be explicit and horrible and so we have seen that these particular creatures are screaming langoustines which wriggle into one of your orifices and make their way to your cerebral cortex. There they lurk, providing you with the ability to communicate telepathically with other Hive creatures, and subtly altering your humanity so that your friends look at you sideways.

Jack Ruby was Hive, which finally explains all that Lee Harvey Oswald business, and there was a time when Kimberly Sayers was Hive, too. Kimberly? She is our heroine who criss-crosses the United States in a magnificent 'fifties' Studebaker with tail fins the size of an English family saloon, driven by our hero, John Loengard, pronounced "Low On Guard". Kimberly has been de-Hived, a perilous process which involves drinking a tankard of foaming sherbert (to correct the pH balance in the body) and then getting a friend to inject you with a pint or so of nail polish remover, using one of those hypodermics usually reserved for cattle.

In the very first episode Loengard told us "I came to Washington to stand in the light, fighting for the things I believe in". Put something

like that into a British fantasy series and everyone would fall about, but Americans - with a solid tradition behind them of westerns in which men were always doing what men had to do - can get away with it. The point is that Loengard was a member of the Kennedy Camelot set who, as a political researcher, discovered that the famous 1947 incident in the desert at Roswell did indeed involve a visit from a flying saucer and that President Truman himself was present. Episode 1 included a *Close Encounters* scenario in which the American military shot down the alien visitors, an act of trigger-happy idiocy from which everything else in this highly enjoyable farrajo stems.

In particular Loengard became involved with the shady government organisation Project Majestic which can over-ride the commands of the Army and is even powerful enough to stick out its tongue at J. Edgar Hoover. Having run with the Majestic hounds for a while, but taken exception to their ethics (well, lack of them), our hero is now a renegade fox, answerable only to Robert Kennedy - and I am afraid The Hive may have plans for Bobby. So now *Dark Skies* has this rather attractive couple in a vast gas guzzler, walking point, as we used to say in 'Nam, out on the leading edge, in the most dangerous position.

Despite their meddling they are tolerated by the cynical and sinister forces of Majestic because Loengard has an uncanny instinct for sniffing out Hive activities, and Kimberly (impossible to write that name without hearing Victoria Wood say it...) has something residual around her cerebral cortex which enables her to suss out baddies like a latterday Sherlock Holmes. Given the number of Americans who believe that NASA's entire space programme was mocked up in a television studio; and given the number who sincerely believe they have been abducted by aliens, injected with something or other, and sent back to live among us, it would be interesting to know how many see *Dark Skies* - with its UFOs and its devious government agents busy suppressing all news of UFOs - as the gospel truth. And does the series not owe a large debt to *The X-Files*? Of course, and to *Twist Peaks*, and even to James Bond. The stolen portrait of the Duke of Wellington hanging in the villain's lair was the predecessor to all these reinterpretations of baffling news stories. Why is it that the British, who had such triumphs with *The Avengers* and *Dr Who* all those years ago, now seem so sad at this sort of bokum?

All shook up over classical music

Does 'downsizing' mean going downmarket? Andrew Clark talks to the president of PolyGram

If you believe the doomsters, the classical record market is not just in the doldrums - it's in free fall. The retail trade, they claim, will soon be redundant, as music becomes accessible on the Internet; musicians and consumers will join hands in cyberspace, unencumbered by record companies acting as middle-men.

It's a fascinating piece of crystal-ball-gazing, but reality is more down-to-earth. The big record companies are still recording Beethoven symphonies and still making profits, albeit in smaller quantities than before. And after five years of stagnation, they have begun to adapt to the market-place.

Nowhere is the need for rationalisation greater than at PolyGram Classics. British-based but Dutch-controlled, PolyGram brought together three major labels, Deutsche Grammophon (DG), Decca and Philips, in the 1970s to become the biggest player in the market. By the late 1980s, like EMI and other rivals, it was enjoying record profits, as consumers bought CDs to replace their vinyl collections. It received a further boost in 1990 with Decca's release of the first Three Tenors album, which sold more than 10m copies.

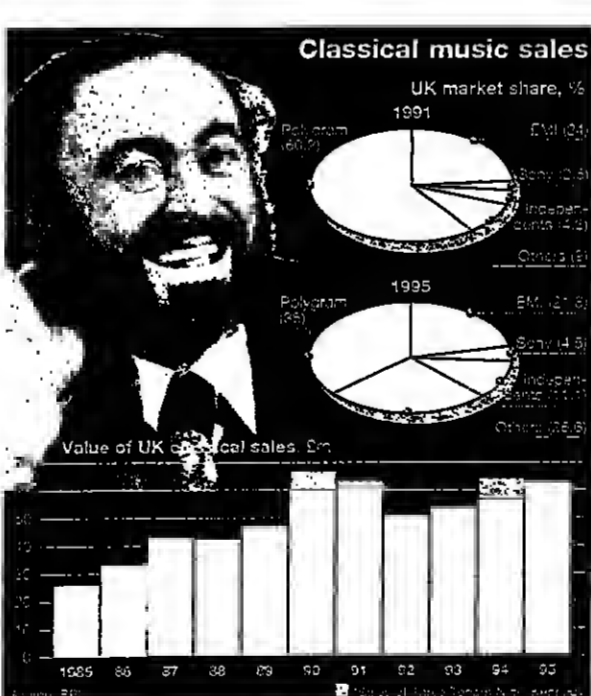
With the saturation of the CD market, however, the big record companies took a tumble, and PolyGram Classics had fared no better. Between 1991 and 1995, it lost almost half its UK market share; worldwide turnover slumped from £1 102m to £1 882m (£248m) - a drop in real terms of 23.8 per cent. Built on the back of names like Karajan and Pavarotti, PolyGram Classics had become fat and complacent. Its marketing was old-fashioned, there was no strategy behind its recording policy. Its three labels often found themselves in direct competition, but they were increasingly indistinguishable to the consumer. Jolted by the arrival of Sony Classics, which tried to poach some of its biggest names, PolyGram had committed itself to expensive artist contracts on the assumption of an ever-booming market. When sales slumped, it was too big and inflexible to respond. It needed a new broom.

Step forward Chris Roberts, a 35-year-old American with musical training and experience in record retailing. Roberts joined PolyGram in 1989, took control of the combined US classics and jazz division in 1994 and was appointed president of PolyGram Classics in Jan-

uary 1996. He is now shaking it up, slimming it down and giving it new focus.

Downsizing was inevitable. The three PolyGram labels had no fewer than 22 versions of Musorgsky's *Pictures of an Exhibition*, and 20 of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Some Mahler symphony recordings, costing up to \$20,000 to make, were selling barely 2,000 copies. "PolyGram Classics had become an anachronism," says James Jolly, editor of *Gramophone*. "And some of its problems were of its own making. The classical record market has reached the end of an era, it needs to start again with different rules. If Roberts can get the right recipe for each label, he might make a go of it."

Roberts's strategy is based on aggressive cost-cutting and marketing, much of it modelled on the pop business. It involves: ■ Cutting staff by a third, leaving the group with a payroll of around 250. There has been a clear-out of personnel at the top, and DG and Philips are relocating to Berlin and Amsterdam. Roberts says the big record companies can learn from small independent labels: "If you're big, it's hard to adjust to change. We're not downsizing because we're intimi-



dated, but because it's a better way to do business, to have a choice about how you want to record, where and with whom. The key is flexibility."

■ Sharpening the identity of each label. DG, which had begun to stray into contemporary and crossover music, is being redefined as a German-based label for core repertoire. Decca, with names like Bartoli, Gheorghiu and Pavarotti, will focus on vocal and operatic music. Philips, which had the least-defined identity, is diversifying into contemporary, early and New Age music, without deserting well-established names like Hatikink, Mariner and Gergiev. "Instead of three labels competing in the same repertoire," says Roberts, "we now have three labels which complement each other."

■ Cutting new releases by a third. DG, for example, will drop to around 75 a year. According to Roberts, "all our artists are beginning to realise they must create

more out of less. Historically, the artist would bring his choice of repertoire and we would record it - no questioning, certainly not from a marketing point of view. It's not like that now. We all have to be partners in the process. It means that when you come up with a new release, you have to be able to define to the market why your product is special. Behind every recording there has to be a strategy."

■ An emphasis on media-friendly artists, and closer coordination of record releases and artists' tour programmes. Citing the young German conductor Christian Thielemann as a role-model, Roberts says musicians must become involved in promoting their records. The key issue is not repertoire, but "how much you do, the balance of what you do, and the way you bring it to the consumer."

Like most other classical music managers, Roberts is preoccupied by the shrinking core public in the 45-65

age-range, and the need to attract a younger audience. He says "the huge circle of people between 25 and 45 has never been attacked because there's this self-consciousness about lowering standards. We have to establish an infrastructure to bring these people in, to do things which encourages them to say 'I've listened to *Shine*, I want more Rakhmaninov and Vivaldi.' I'm not so naive to think that Philip Glass will stimulate interest in Beethoven symphonies, but doing projects with Glass or Elvis Costello, or whoever they might be, creates an arc of business we never had before. It's about finding innovative ways to take traditional repertoire to a new audience. The problem with the classical business is that it has never been marketing-oriented."

So is PolyGram heading rapidly downmarket? Roberts insists that commercial logic and artistic value are not mutually exclusive. "The big sellers can be highly artistic - look at Gardiner, Bartoli, Terfel, Rodgers and Hammerstein CD sold 100,000 in four months. Maria Joao Pires's two-CD Chopin set is also into air figures. She's unusual, she's unpredictable, she's enigmatic - there's a story to tell." Roberts does not exclude the Internet from his strategy. The technology exists, he says, and once licensing restrictions are formulated, "it will be no less competitive than television programming. Unlike the retail business, where you can't store the complete catalogue because it doesn't move quickly enough or there's not enough space, the Internet can store everything. But you can't just say that because something exists, people are going to download it. The choice is crazy today, and will only become crazier. That's why brand identification, artist identification, are so important."

Phone in to La Scala

On Thursday La Scala finally introduced a 24-hour international telephone booking service for opera enthusiasts the world over. To book tickets from anywhere in the world the number is 39 (the Italian country code) 2 (the Milan city code) 860787. For Milan residents the number is

860775. After booking tickets by telephone it will be necessary to confirm these by fax within 48 hours quoting the booking number. Tickets will then be sent by registered post and payment can be made either by credit card or bank transfer.

Paul Betts

VISIT THE *Antiques* FAIR AT
THE NATIONAL EXHIBITION CENTRE
BIRMINGHAM
3rd-6th April 1997
The 3rd & 4th April 10am - 6pm
Sat 5th & Sun 6th April 11am - 6pm
Entrance First Day: £5.50 All Other Days: £5.50
TICKETS: 0121 767 4789

ST. JOSEPH'S
HOSPICE
MARE ST. LONDON E3 4SA
(Charity No. 23323)
*An Easter
Message*
Throughout the long winter,
the last for many in our
care, the warmth of your
compassion was unforgettable.
We thank you on their behalf.
May your kindness be blessed
by peace and good health
during Easter and all seasons.
Sister Superior

2.
ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS
Outstanding exhibitions year-round...
Royal Academy of Arts
Friends enjoy unlimited visits exclusive weekly evening viewings full colour quarterly
Free art journal special lectures and study days. Annual subscription £45
Just £10 (admits up to four adults)
Ask about additional benefits, greater membership such as breakfast with
exhibition curator.
Ask for Clare Harris on 0171 494 5067

SPORT

Basketball

No slamdunks but many team players

The times are a-changin' for the better in Minnesota, says Jurek Martin

Any state that produces Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale and Bob Dylan knows about winning, losing and the hard rain that stops play. Yet sport and Minnesota have never made for an indelible association, a couple of World Series crowns for the baseball twins excepted.

On no diamond, rink or court has Minnesota achieved less than in basketball, generally accorded religious status in most of the mid-west. The old Minneapolis Lakers, led by George Mikan, the sport's prototype outside centre, did win five of the first eight professional championships in the immediate post-war years, but subsequently decamped to Los Angeles. In the 1990s, the modern Timberwolves have stopped fewer opponents than the Ancient Mariner.

The University of Minnesota's Golden Gophers boast no record to speak of. They took 50 years to win a Big Ten league championship, took their last one in 1962

and have never made the collegiate final four.

Yet, with the professional season two-thirds over and collegiate March Madness down to the round of the sweet sixteen, Minnesota is on something of a roll. The Timberwolves, improbably, have won as many games as they have lost and seem certain to make the play-offs for the first time.

The Gophers are ranked second in the country among university teams, behind only Kansas, whom they are fancied to meet in the final in Indianapolis on March 31.

Both teams speak volumes about the transitional state of modern basketball, where college may no longer be seen as a proving ground for the professional league and

young egos make mockery of old values and methods.

The Timberwolves' best player is forward Tom Gugliotta, a product of the old school who came out of North Carolina State after four hard years with a polished, rounded game. But after some good initial seasons with the Washington Bullets, he became trade bait for flashier talent, to the point that the move to hapless Minnesota last season looked like the end of his line.

His principal sidekick in this happy revival took a different route. Kevin Garnett, also a forward, skipped university altogether, while guard Stephen Marbury put in just one year at Georgia Tech before turning professional. Yet by some process

of osmosis, allied to ability, the three have combined to provide a triple threat to the NBA's best.

By contrast, Allen Iverson, the supremely talented Philadelphia rookie out of Georgetown, is drawing fire from his peers and the press for selfishness on the court and an "in your face" attitude off it, only partly explained by the fact that he plays for a poor side.

There probably is not a single Golden Gopher with a legitimate shot at professional stardom. But that means that coach Clem Haskins, no ingénue himself, has five role-playing seniors (fourth year men) on a hard-earned 10-man frontline squad. Kansas has a comparable deep veteran quality, as does

UCLA from California. By contrast, universities with one outstanding player but indifferent supporting casts (like Wake Forest with Tim Duncan and Maryland and Keith Booth) have already been defeated.

There is now an established transfer market within the university game that even getting to the tournament was his finest and most enjoyable coaching achievement. Few professional coaches enjoy comparable security and for them the revolving door this season has rarely turned faster. While the failure to win accounts for some coming and goings, it is becoming increasingly obvious that if a star player

the NBA or to other colleges, puts a premium on coaching. It is hard not to admire how Dean Smith of North Carolina has built a very competitive team out of material modest by the Michael Jordanesque standards to which he had become accustomed. An Iverson-less brick-shooting Georgetown may have faltered at the first hurdle, but John Thompson believes that even getting to the tournament was his finest and most enjoyable coaching achievement.

Few professional coaches enjoy comparable security and for them the revolving door this season has rarely turned faster. While the failure to win accounts for some coming and goings, it is becoming increasingly obvious that if a star player

becomes discontented it is the man with clipboard who gets the marching orders (an exception was the extraordinary February swap of half the New Jersey Nets for half the Dallas Mavericks, but both teams were going nowhere until the Nets recently rose up and beat Chicago and New York in successive games).

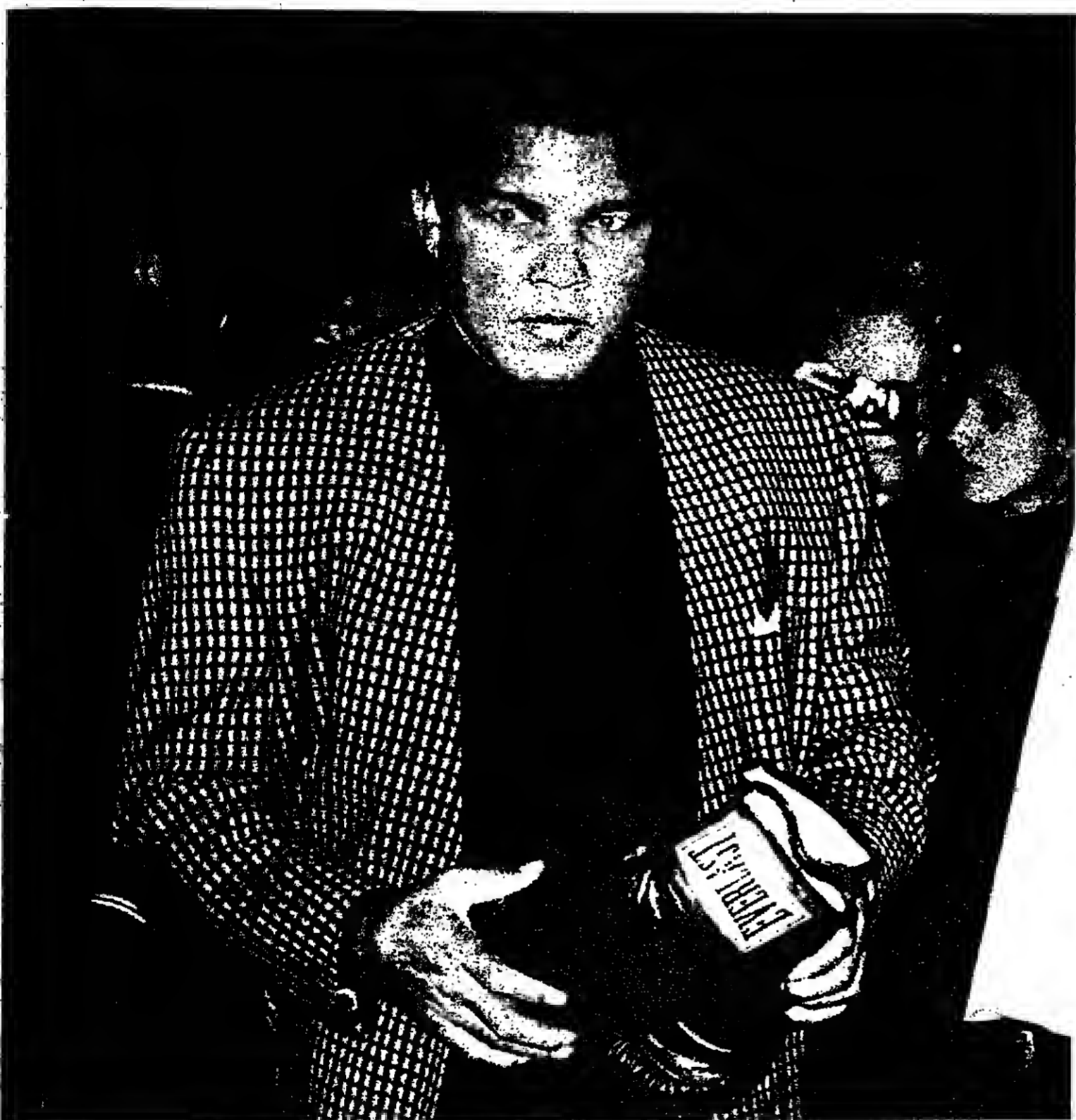
There is now statistical reinforcement for the traditionalist argument that modern young players are more interested in showcasing their slamdunks and three-point field goals for the evening TV highlight films than in acquiring the basic skills that make for winning sides.

In both the college and professional games, the percentage of free throws made

has fallen to 30-year lows, while turnovers are up, assists down and the old-fashioned setting of a solid physical screen has become almost a museum piece outside Utah, where the Jazz still run a basic pick-and-roll offence.

There are exceptions, of course. The Chicago Bulls, gently guided by Phil Jackson to a winning record almost as good as last year's best ever, still do the little things right, like not passing the ball to the opposition. (They also have M. Jordan to turn to.) The best collegiate tournament contest to date saw big and talented California barely squeak past short but disciplined Princeton in a deliciously low-scoring game.

And this year there is the Minnesota story. Even if the Timberwolves tumble, which they surely will, and the Golden Gophers cannot find the hole in the basket when it matters, there is one state in the US where the words of its greatest songwriter resonate, "The times they are a-changin'" - for the better.



The sling may have gone and the patter changed a little but Muhammad Ali has much to say - in a new book

The old Ali magic lives on

No longer king of the ring, but Muhammed Ali still holds an audience, says Alex McGregor

The capacious gym of the Alvin Locke High School in south central Los Angeles might be big enough to house a 747, but today it is jammed with 1,800 students and seems almost cramped.

There is a marching band banging away, cheerleaders in short skirts going through their routines, and uniformed cadets, complete with rifles, doing their drills. The blur of sound and colour is transformed by a sudden burst of cheering when the guest of honour, Muhammed Ali, shuffles into the school gym with his retinue of television cameras and photographers.

The Ali shuffle, once a mercurial dance routine in the ring, is now just a shuffle. His animated face has been stilled. The motor skills are clearly diminished by Parkinson's Disease, but he is unmistakably Ali. At 54, he is a little heavier than his optimum fighting weight, but still youthful and without discernable scars on a face that weathered 51 professional fights and much controversy.

Today, he is on tour, visiting south-central high schools in a media bus, promoting a co-authored book *Healing: A Journal of Tolerance and Understanding*. It is a pocket-sized tome of feel-good aphorisms and designed to promote racial

harmony. His high-school purpose is to spread the message by handing out the book and presenting prizes to an Ali-sponsored art competition. A pair of Ali-signed boxing gloves is the first prize.

For those who think it hypocritical that Ali, who once called for segregation, should be promoting racial harmony, there is a ready response in the book: "When I was young, I followed a teaching that disrespected other people and said that white people were 'devils'. I was wrong. Colour doesn't make a man a devil. It's the heart and soul and mind that count."

Part school assembly, part evangelical rally, this promotion in the high school gym has the awkward spontaneity of audience participation on a television programme. "Will you please stand?" says the headmistress, as the band kicks in with the national anthem. She then thanked "the greatest heavyweight boxing champ of all time", and the event's sponsor "one of the entertainment leaders of our time - HBO" (that is, Home Box Office, the US company which broadcasts pay-per-view boxing matches, among other entertainment).

Still, the shrillest cheers of the afternoon come from another speaker, the handsome, sharply dressed Roy Jones junior, the current

world super middleweight champion. Regularly acclaimed as, pound-for-pound, the "best boxer in the world", he is also challenging for Ali's all-time title of the "prettiest".

Given that most of the students were not born when Ali fought his last fight in 1981, it is perhaps a surprise that many would know him for being anything other than a "famous personality". Most wouldn't know that Ali

'Colour doesn't make a man a devil. It's the heart and soul and mind that count'

earned his fame the hard way, not only as a three-time heavyweight champion, but also outside the ring, fighting with the US government over the Vietnam war draft and his status in the Nation of Islam.

But while Ali is physically a sport of his great self, he is still a big drawcard. His primary income is derived from personal appearances and from autographs for the increasingly lucrative sports

collectables market in the US. Certainly his icon status received a boost when he lit the torch at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. The book itself is another Ali collectable, described by his co-author Thomas Hauser, whose Ali biography was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, as "a calling card".

"It gives Muhammad something which to wrap himself around. He's not just going around being famous, he's talking about something," Hauser says.

Except that Ali is not talking much, or not in public. The only time he speaks during his schools' tour is after being presented with a certificate from the Los Angeles mayor's office.

"I come all the way from Chicago," he says in a whisper, hesitant, almost unintelligible voice. "I visit the schools and this is all you give me."

The auditorium gets the joke, and erupts with laughter. If Ali is unable to speak at length, his wife, Lonnie, is an eloquent substitute, unafraid of audience confrontation: "This book is no good on your shelf, you have to read it." When a student is booted for reading a poem in Spanish, Lonnie makes the obvious point: "She has the right to be here. That's what this book is all about."

It is hard not to feel sadness at seeing one of the finest athletes of the modern

age now a quivering shadow of the glory days figure. Yet Ali carries himself without self-pity, stopping to greet all in his path, old and young, black and white. And to the chagrin of anyone interested in autograph rarity, Ali signs anything that moves within pen distance.

Having conducted the majority of his life in the public eye - whether as the champ or the convert or as a poster boy for the disabled - Ali is unable to hide himself away, whatever his difficulties and regardless of his popularity or unpopularity. He shows himself to be a man as proud of his defeats as he is of his victories.

Later, after another gym filled with students, marching bands, and dancing cheerleaders, speeches and the same jokes, Ali is ushered into the backroom, where refreshments are served for the travelling press and the prizewinners of the art contest.

Even as the attention is on consuming food and drink, there are poses and photographic opportunities choreographed around Ali, until he puts an end to it by moving to one side of the room.

Suddenly, he starts performing magic tricks, first levitating and then making coins disappear. There is little magic in the tricks, and less after he tells how they work, but there is still much magic in the man.

Yachting

Legion d'Honneur for a brave sailor

Keith Wheatley reports on Peter Goss's heroic rescue of fellow Vendee Globe competitor Raphael Dinelli

This weekend, in the Biscay port of Les Sables d'Olonne, a British sailor will receive the French equivalent of a ticker-tape parade from thousands of admirers. President Jacques Chirac has already nominated the shy yachtsman for the Legion d'Honneur and numerous other international bravery awards await Pete Goss.

His rescue of Raphael Dinelli, a fellow competitor in the Vendee Globe solo-around-the-world race, in a near hurricane 1,200 miles south of Tasmania, was somewhat overshadowed at the time by the Australian navy finding Tony Bullimore (another Vendee sailor) alive in his own capsized boat.

That rescue involved an astonishing panoply of warships, long-range aircraft and helicopters. Goss had just an iron will, his 50ft yacht and sea-faring skill to sail back 180 miles into the teeth of a 60-knot gale, search an area the size of Hampshire, and find Dinelli in a tiny liferaft.

On Christmas Day, three months ago, Goss was below decks aboard the bright yellow Aqua Quorum and fearing for his own life. Storm winds were too strong to carry any sail and huge seas repeatedly knocked the yacht flat. He recorded in the log that he had "never felt so close to disaster".

At that precise moment the satellite communications system beeped out a message from the race control in Paris. Dinelli had abandoned ship. Goss was the nearest vessel. Could he assist and mount a search?

To turn and sail upwind in such winds is true horror, as any sailor knows. Goss did not hesitate.

"Life eventually boils down to a choice - you either stand by your responsibilities and principles, or you don't," he later reported to his team back in UK. Forty-eight hours of hell, with exploding generators,

torn mainsails and the skipper exhausted in his sleeping bag, took Goss back to Dinelli's last known position. After sailing three search patterns, each taking up to five hours, he had found nothing. Desperate, irrational, Goss stood in the bow of Aqua Quorum blasting a fog horn and firing off flares while he howled Dinelli's name against the shrieking gale.

When he finally spotted the orange raft and brought the Frenchman aboard, Dinelli was too stiff and cold to move. Despite his immersion suit, three days in the raft had left him near to death. Getting a body that was in a state of virtual rigor mortis through the tiny hatch and below decks

Goss found leaving Hobart for the hellish Southern Ocean hard

was an epic struggle in itself.

Goss turned from lifeboatman to nurse. Dinelli needed his frozen limbs massaged, constant hot drinks and attention. He had to be carried to the toilet. All the while Pete Goss had to urge the yacht towards Tasmania, 1,800 miles to the north-east, where he would disembark his patient before continuing the race.

When they arrived Aqua Quorum was tied to a buoy outside the harbour to avoid breaching the outside assistance rules governing the race. While Dinelli faced a barrage of agents, movie producers and Paris Match correspondents waving cheque books, Goss repaired his battered yacht.

By his own admission, he found leaving Hobart for the hellish wastes of the Southern Ocean brutally hard. He was now out of

touch with the race leaders, his great friend Gerry Roufs was missing presumed drowned (the 1996-97 Vendee's only fatality) and Goss had just experienced first-hand what a shipwreck could do to the mind and body of a lone sailor.

He also had no idea that he was soon to undergo a crash course in surgery. A nagging elbow injury became inflamed off Cape Horn and Goss could no longer use his left arm. Doctors at race headquarters in Paris announced that he would have to operate on himself.

Goss strapped a mirror to his knee, a flashlight to his head and took instructions from Dr Jean-Yves Chauve over the satellite communications system. Goss was told to anaesthetise the skin with cream and then make a 2cm deep incision to drain two hernias.

"It didn't hurt as much as I had expected and I was amazed at how sharp the scalpel was, much easier than carving roast dinner," Goss said. "I must say it was a very strange sensation, slicing away at oneself."

Goss has the ability to inspire intense, almost fanatical, loyalty in the teams of people that he brings together to build the boats and run the shoreside operations of a long offshore campaign. The boat-builders who worked extraordinary hours to finish Aqua Quorum were convinced at the outset that there was neither the time nor money to finish the yacht. But their skipper proved them wrong. Strangers wrote offering to lick stamps or knock on doors in the search for sponsorship. The people of Plymouth donated 2,500kg of lead for the yacht's keel after a radio appeal.

"When I step on to the boat to go racing I never forget how many people have worked and made sacrifices to put me there," Goss said before leaving on the Vendee. "It's often the respect for their efforts that keeps me going."



A man to inspire others: Peter Goss at the start of the eventful Vendee Global Challenge

Alagon

How to Spend It

Fashion

Dynamic duo fly the flag for new Britglam

Damian Foxe gets a line on those masters of monochrome – Pearce and Fionda

It's unanimous. Pearce Fionda has triumphed again. From the 1987 spring/summer collection of London's Fashion Week, one dress appeared most often, novel in maturity, unique in sophistication, emblazoned across every key UK newspaper. A whirlpool of spirals, a swirl of satin-backed crepe, it swept down every fashion page, embodying new direction for British glamour.

In contrasting panels of matt and shine, it unfurled into a torrent of fabric, cascading outwards from below the knee. Shoe string straps crossed at the back, its double cowl neck concealed a layer of sheerest chiffon, like a single windswept petal resting on a flushed bosom.

With a predominantly monochrome palette and silhouettes as sleek as liquid ink, Pearce Fionda's vision ran straight off the catwalk and down the nib of every fashion editor's pen.

Although only showing for its fifth season, the Pearce Fionda label displays a maturity which belies its age. The winner of last year's new generation award, sponsored by Marks and Spencer, this year the pair was nominated in three categories: Designer of the Year, New Generation and Glamour. In January 1995, after their debut collection in October 1994, they received the British Apparel Export Award sponsored by the BKEEC and Fashion Weekly.

Most recently they collected the World Young Designers award in Istanbul where judges included Oscar de la Renta, Anna Molinari and John Rocha. Pearce Fionda are fast becoming the veterans of domestic British fashion. Their elders have long since decamped to Paris or Milan. Pearce Fionda have become a conquering force, with a mature approach to design and a keen business eye.

This season, they managed to pare down their already sharp and clean lines,

removing some of the complicated detailing, to produce a collection which struck a near perfect balance between fluid and tailored. Smartly fitted black jackets in satin-backed crepe, super clean structures are teamed with high-waisted Oxford bags which graze the ankle bone, and offer a modern and sophisticated day look.

A strapless, boned, black evening dress hangs perilously, suspending a huge bow and trailing strands of contrasting white, encapsulating their obsession with the extremes of glamour and the elegant side of the avant-garde. "Our colours are still predominantly monochrome," explain the design duo, "but black and ivory are highlighted with dove grey and white so the silhouette is not dominated by vivid colours."

Super-fine knits in graphic horizontal registers of black and white are teamed with heavy weight jersey wide-legged pants in contrasting vertical stripes. A flattering black jersey tunic dress skims the body, featuring a thigh-high split and an optional hood; sinister and sexy.

Reynold Pearce (known as Ren) and Andrew Fionda met in 1985 at Nottingham Trent University, where they studied fashion. Fionda then did an MA at the Royal College of Art and Pearce an MA at Central St Martins. Between degrees, Pearce worked for John Galiano during his "black and yellow" period (1988-89), where he developed a reputation for specialised cutting and tailoring techniques. After college he worked for Roland Klein as his design assistant.

Fionda, determined not to abandon the UK, turned down a job with Escada in Munich to be senior designer with Alexon. The two designers are perfectly matched both in personality and design talent. They argue and often disagree, but it is their compromise which produces such fine garments. "Working in a duo

can get tense at times," admits Fionda, "but the driving force behind our label is too strong to let silly arguments get in the way. We work well together. Ren would be too extreme by himself and I would be far too safe."

By early 1994, the two had amassed a wealth of experi-

ence and were ready to start their own label – Pearce Fionda. Financed by a friend, they put their first collection together, showing a Spring/Summer collection in October 1994. It was so well received that an agent, Palladio, had to be appointed at short notice to cope with the flood of orders.

In monochrome, the collection achieved depth and richness through the ingenious use of fabrics, heavy crepe georgettes, satin back crepes and traditional tailoring fabrics. Textures were important, as was the contrast of matt and shine, with both sides of the same fabric cleverly juxtaposed. Their Chaplinesque look, tailcoat cut, sharply away from the bust, teamed with miniature top hat, and covering a double cuffed shirt and long flowing trousers in varying black and white stripes typified their quirky approach to the "feminisation" of traditionally masculine shapes. Tuxedos with gently fluted sleeves were scooped at the collars to fit below the bust.

Even the most hardened buyers were tempted. "I broke my golden rule of watching a company for three seasons before buying," says Rita Britten the owner of Polyanna, one of Britain's most influential women's retail outlets. The collection was exquisitely beautiful but you could see women wearing it. It made the hairs on my neck stand up. Within a year they were stocked in Harvey Nichols, Liberty, and Selfridges in London, Bergdorf Goodman and Saks of New York, and Firenze di Dublin, as well as a large number of smaller retailers around the world.

Their second catwalk show was sponsored by Liberty, which devoted all of its Regent Street windows to their collection. "We discovered Pearce Fionda last season and were struck by their confidence and maturity of



Ren Pearce and Andrew Fionda display fashion maturity that belies their years

design in a first collection," said Tom Logan, the merchandise director at Liberty at the time.

Pearce Fionda boast a healthy turnover of £500,000 a year with more than 30 stockists round the world. For the second consecutive season, Lloyds Bank has sponsored their Spring/Summer 1997 catwalk presentation. Unlike many other young British designers, they do not rely on the demands within the fickle Japanese market, which laps up the newest, quirkiest fashion that Britain can produce. Instead, they have developed a strong and loyal client base spread across northern Europe, north America and south-east Asia.

They have encountered financial problems, however. So great was the demand for last season's collection, that they almost went under. "We ploughed all of our resources into manufacturing in an attempt to meet all our orders," explains Fionda, "and kept nothing in reserve for this season." Less than three months ago, fabrics for the current collection were cancelled and staff sent home. But they came up with a strategy. "We started again from scratch," admits

Pearce, "cutting the collection in half and concentrating on what the buyers would want."

As testament to their wise business sense, orders this season grew once again and the press raved over the finished product. Following lengthy negotiations they have now signed with an undisclosed British backer, who is a key player in the international fashion.

The Autumn/Winter 1996 collection, available in exclusive stores around the country, marks a departure from their established palette, introducing chocolate and cream as principal colours, broken with flashes of pistachio and coral. Contrast this with superstructured tailoring for short fitted jackets, maxi-coats, boot-leg trousers and skinny pants and you begin to appreciate the versatility of their talent.

Envelop yourself in a chocolate satin, bias-cut, column dress which sheaths your body and is dragged back from the calf with a weightless fish tail and you will appreciate its timeless appeal and its innate feel-good factor, fulfilling the duo's promise that "it is the wearer's enjoyment which is most important."

It is neither the sharpness of their silhouette nor the cleanliness of their lines that put Pearce Fionda on the

□ Sleek and sexy – left to right: black satin crepe one button long sleeve evening jacket, £287. Matching wide leg evening trousers, £298. Slip vest, £117. Harrods and Selfridges.

□ Lilac satin bias cut evening dress, £1,485. Harrods, Selfridges, Harvey Nichols and Le Cohn.

□ Eau-de-Nil one button fitted long-sleeved jacket, £650. Harrods, Harvey Nichols, Liberty and Selfridges. Matching V-neck shift dress, £398. Harvey Nichols. Stockist inquiries: 0171-809 8470.

Illustrations by David Dowdton



The Financial Times plans to publish a Survey on

The Business of Football

on Tuesday, April 29

For more information on advertising opportunities and a full editorial synopsis, please contact:

Pat Looker

Tel: +44 161 834 9381

Fax: +44 161 832 9248

or your usual Financial Times representative

FT Surveys

We're a million miles away from the Conran Shop



Exquisitely crafted contemporary furniture from Madrid



DE LA ESPADA

CALL 0171 581 4474

FOR A FREE CATALOGUE

60 St. James Avenue, London NW3

Open 7 days a week

(100 yards from Conran's)

COOMBELANDS RACING STABLES

Outstanding Flat and National Hunt racing prospects for sale now.

For further details or to arrange a visit to this famous training centre in Sussex please call Amanda Perrett

Office 01798 673011

Mobile 0410 575970

THE W
Bed. Lu
110 sq. ft.

ESTIMATE

PRIVATE

200 sq. ft.

100 sq. ft.

50 sq. ft.

25 sq. ft.

12 sq. ft.



The in crowd

'The Euro '96 anthem was "Football's Coming Home". Now, homes are coming to football.'



Tax and the home

'Labour would target people who are avoiding paying tax by exploiting loopholes in the current system.'



New landlords

'People buying places to rent want more than just a piece of paper telling them they have money in the bank.'

Page 6

Page 9

Page 3

The world's most elite property club

You need more than the odd million to buy a really prestigious home, says Anne Spackman

Being a millionaire no longer guarantees entry to the world's prime property club. From London to New York and Tokyo, the best houses and slices of land trade for many millions of pounds.

In Britain, one in every 550 adults is now a millionaire, according to a recent survey by Datamonitor. The trouble is, the more millionaires there are to compete for the best properties, the higher the prices rise.

Just two years ago, £1m would buy you a large freehold house in one of London's most popular roads. Knight Frank sold houses in Kensington Square, Brompton Square and Argyll Road for that price in 1995.

Now, that same money would buy you one of the best houses in Wandsworth or Highgate, but only a new house or a large apartment in a prime district.

Knight Frank's current offerings at around the £1m mark include a brand new three-bedroom, three-bathroom flat at Mount Vernon in Hampstead, a penthouse loft in Soho, a three-bedroom flat overlooking Hyde Park and two central London mews houses.

City bonuses have been one cause of the sharp rise in prime UK property prices. The most senior figures in the banking world are active in the London market up to about £4.5m. Above that figure only the international super-rich and those who have created their own business empires are likely to compete.

In 1995, there were 14 sales in London for between £4.5m and £5m and six sales above that figure. At the moment there are 22 properties for sale for more than £4.5m, only seven of which cost more than £5m.

Anyone buying at this

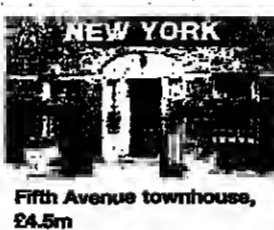
level is likely to have homes in more than one country in the world. In some countries they are likely to have two. So, looking across the globe, what are the choices available to them?

At £5m you can have your pick of the London family houses. A large detached property in St John's Wood, Holland Park or Hampstead is likely to sell for around that price - if you can find one to buy. Or in Mayfair, you could afford a vast penthouse or a refurbished townhouse.

London has traditionally been a city of houses, but now developers are producing very smart lateral apartments in this price range. The best on the market is the Chelsfield development at Chesham Place in Belgravia, where a stunning apartment of 4,300 sq ft is being offered at £4.75m by Knight Frank and Aylesford.

In the country market,

Around the world with £5m



NEW YORK
Fifth Avenue townhouse, \$4.5m



UK
Worcestershire: Eastington Hall Estate, over £5m



GERMANY
Black Forest: Hofgut Premersberg, £7m



TOKYO
Value in land
A good building site for £5m



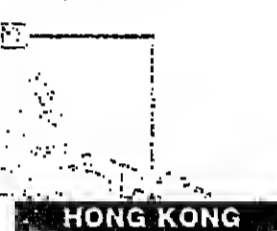
MALIBU
Film star bracket
An elegant Bel-Air mansion for £5m



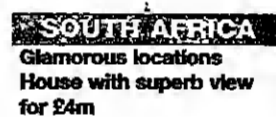
TUSCANY
Castello di Montepo, £4m



VENICE
Ca'Dario, £5m



HONG KONG
Hong Kong Peak: three-bedroom apartment, £5m



SOUTH AFRICA
Glamorous locations
House with superb view for £4m

£5m will buy a small estate in one of the less expensive counties or a substantial house with land in a prime location. Offers over £3m are being sought for the Eastington Hall Estate in Worcestershire, which includes a Grade I listed Tudor mansion in 326 acres, with a lake, swimming pool and three cottages. The house

itself boasts the full plethora of Tudor features - vaulted ceilings, carved stone, vast fireplaces, panelling and exposed beams. It is being sold by Savills and Butler Sherborn.

To buy a significant, self-supporting English estate requires a few million more. Strutt and Parker is asking for offers of more

than £8.5m for the Pusey estate in Oxfordshire - the first large estate on the market this year. Pusey has a listed Georgian house, outstanding gardens, 1,500 acres of farmland and woodland, a farmhouse and 14 cottages and a proper aristocratic pedigree. It is also in the most sought after area of England, just north of the

M4 corridor - though it is not the most scenic spot. Elsewhere in Europe some of the highest prices are paid for what are essentially holiday homes. In Italy, £5m will buy some of the country's most spectacular properties. The most stunning on the market at exactly that price is the Ca'Dario, one of the most prominent palazzos on

the Grand Canal in Venice. Built in the 1480s by a Venetian merchant, Giovanni Dario, it is as much a work of art as a house. The building is rich in precious materials, with marble columns, carved stone arches and porphyry discs from Istanbul. Ca'Dario is almost

Continued on next page

YOUR UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY FOR INVESTMENT

on London's fashionable South Bank

Panoramic views from the White House

Close to the Houses of Parliament

1 Bed. Apartment 462 sq.ft. (42.8 sq.m.) approx.
London SW1 £185,000*

THE WHITE HOUSE
1 Bed. Luxury Apartment
449 sq.ft. (41.6 sq.m.) approx.
from only

£115,000

ESTIMATED RENTAL £14,820 P.A.
ESTIMATED GROSS RENTAL YIELD **12.8%**

Adjacent The Royal Festival Hall

2 Bed. Apartment 667 sq.ft. (61.8 sq.m.) approx.
London SW1 £275,000*

THE WHITE HOUSE
2 Bed. Luxury Apartment
635 sq.ft. (58.9 sq.m.) approx.
from only

£155,000

ESTIMATED RENTAL £19,500 P.A.
ESTIMATED GROSS RENTAL YIELD **12.5%**

BEVEDERE ROAD SOUTH BANK LONDON

49% GROWTH POTENTIAL ON YOUR EQUITY

85% INVESTMENT MORTGAGES NOW AVAILABLE!

RESIDENTS Exclusive Club SERVICES*

Includes: concierge • domestic staff • dry cleaning & laundry • baby sitting • restaurant, theatre, entertainment booking ... and more!

'Luxurious 1, 2 & 3 Bedroom Apartments enjoying some of London's finest panoramic views'

PRIVATE HEALTH & LEISURE COMPLEX
Including:
Indoor Swimming Pool • Spa Bath
Gymnasium • Sauna/Steam Room

FULLY SERVICED BUSINESS CENTRE*
Including:
Full secretarial services • Luxurious fully furnished reception, office, meeting & conference rooms • 24 hr. live telephone answering • Global telecommunications High tech computer workstations.

SALES OFFICE & SHOW SUITES
OPEN 7 DAYS 10AM-5.30PM

TEL: 0171 620 1500

GALLIARD NATIONAL ENQUIRIES
FREEPHONE: 0800 54 56 58 (24 hrs.)

* Figures based on a £250,000 deposit on a £250,000 purchase price and prices quoted London property prices based on 1.2% in 1997 as published by Savills Residential Research, including agent fees, mortgage interest and applicable costs.

A DEVELOPMENT BY GALLIARD HOMES LTD IN ASSOCIATION WITH PROGRESS ESTATES PLC AND PARKVIEW NEW HOMES PLC.

* Subject to credit and income part of the service charge. * An agreement to purchase is required. ** Subject to status and location specific conditions.

STATE OF THE MARKET

The elite property club

Continued from Page 1

next door to the Guggenheim Foundation, across the canal from St Mark's Square. The view from its roof terrace is down the canal to the Accademia. It has its own pontoon, two main floors of living accommodation, staff quarters and a walled garden. Visitors to the house in the 19th century included John Ruskin, who did a painting of the building in 1846.

More recent owners have included the former manager of the rock band, The Who. Agents DTZ Debenham Thorpe expect the next owners to be from the world of music, the arts, or film. "No one is likely to live in this house all year round," says Jonathan Woodfield of DTZ. "It is likely to go to someone famous who will use it as a statement of their lifestyle."

Further south in Italy, Knight Frank and Chianti Estates in Siena are selling a 16th century castle in Tuscany with a price tag of 12.3bn lire, just under £4m. Laid out around a courtyard, on a hill overlooking its own vineyard and 1,000 acres of land, the castle has vast rooms for entertaining as well as family accommodation. The combination is well illustrated on the second floor which includes a monk's room, a nun's room, the portrait gallery and a vast party room.

Another example of a luxury treat comes from the Black Forest in Germany. Hofgut Fremersberg is a country house, which was once home to the Siemens family, just outside the spa town of Baden Baden. The four-storey stone house, with large bay windows and terraces overlooks its own formal gardens and sits in richly wooded countryside. It has seven bedrooms, a staff flat, gardener's cottage and swimming pool and is for sale through Knight Frank for DM20m - around £7m.

In Portugal, Knight Frank is selling a "palacete" on a hillside overlooking Sintra,

near its famous Moorish castle. The property has 14 rooms, filled with antique furniture, and spectacular gardens and terraces. It is priced at around £3.75m.

In New York, where the property market recovery lags a little behind London, \$7.5m will buy a smart townhouse in Manhattan's Upper East side. Sotheby's International Realty is selling such a house just off Fifth Avenue, with 11,000 sq ft of living accommodation including a panelled library and six bedrooms, for \$7.2m.

Alternatively, you could have your pick of the luxury apartment blocks around Central Park. For \$8.3m you could even afford to buy one of the penthouse apartments in Donald Trump's latest tower at Number One Central Park West. The apartment is on the 48th floor, with views across the city, a 50ft main reception room,

In Hong Kong, £5m still buys a lot - up to 3,000 sq ft in a prime site

five bedrooms and six bathrooms.

These are by no means the most expensive properties in the city. That accolade belongs to a 12,000 sq ft triplex apartment, with ballroom, on top of the Pierre Hotel. Owned by Lady Fairfax, of the Australian newspaper dynasty, the apartment is priced at \$27m.

On the West coast \$5m takes you into the film star bracket. Sotheby's is currently selling a property on the ocean in Malibu, California, where location and view is everything, for \$7.9m. An elegant Bel-Air mansion, in gated grounds of four acres, with 11,000 sq ft of living space, recently sold for \$8.6m. Built for a couple, it had one main bedroom and six staff bedrooms.

In South Africa, one of the most expensive houses on the market enjoys views of the ocean, the Hottentots Mountains and the Valley of the Vines. Constantia Heights is in one of Cape Town's most glamorous locations. The main house is

joined by an underground passage to a leisure complex with swimming pool, steam room, gym and waterfall. Set in the grounds is a four bedroom guest house and two more cottages. Pam Golding International is asking for offers over £4m.

The difference between the price to be paid for property in the cities and in the countryside is greatest in south-east Asia. In Hong Kong there is not enough land to qualify as countryside. While countryside exists in Japan, it is largely mountainous and difficult to develop.

In the last seven years, since the bubble burst in Tokyo, property prices have fallen by up to 50 per cent. Rents in the city are now slightly lower than in Hong Kong, with Singapore the most expensive.

In Tokyo \$5m now buys a good piece of building land in one of the good districts within the Yamamoto Line. "That amount now buys you twice as much as it would have seven years ago," says Guy Cubitt, Richard Ellis' managing director in Tokyo.

His company has sold a 10,000 sq ft site, without a building on it, to a prominent Japanese businessman for ¥1bn. Guy Cubitt says it will probably cost at least another £1m to build a reasonably lavish two-storey house, with around 6,000 sq ft of accommodation and a garden. "There is not the same market in buildings here," he says. "The value is in the land."

In Hong Kong, where prime property values rose at least 35 per cent last year, \$5m - HK\$60m - still buys quite a lot of property. David Faulkner of Brooke Hillier Parker says you could buy an apartment of up to 3,000 sq ft in a prime location such as The Peak. A three-bedroom, three-bathroom apartment on Old Peak Road is for sale at HK\$60m.

In Singapore \$5m falls awkwardly between the top of the mass market and the start of the luxury market. Bill McClintock, of Hamptons International, says it would buy a small three-bedroom house with a garden in one of the nicer parts of Singapore. For a larger house, or the even more luxurious "bungalows", as they are called, prices would be nearer \$8m to \$10m.

Your home and a new government

Gerald Cadogan considers what a Labour election victory will mean for the UK housing market

When the FT's next property supplement comes out in June, a new Labour government could well have been with us for at least a month, and we may already have had a Budget or be on the point of having one.

So how will a Labour government affect the housing market this year? Not much, say estate agents, although they await a blip in the upward trend of prices around the election.

But the picture may be a bit more complicated, especially if Labour's policies in office alter the rules or back-drop of owning property.

For example, changes to the UK's tax haven status for rich foreigners such as Greek shipowners - who are resident but not domiciled, and are liable to tax on foreign income and capital gains only to the extent that they are remitted into the UK - could quickly blow the froth off the top end of the London market. The people who led its recovery after the pound lost strength in

September 1992 could sell and start the cooling process.

Price falls, or a stagnation in prices would, in turn, affect the country market as less money was released from London sales to spend on moving home from Holland Park to Gloucestershire.

UK demand for good houses in London is now strong. But would it be strong enough to maintain the market after an exodus of foreigners?

The advisers of Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, doubtless know the problems in taxing foreign residents, as they have caused trouble for previous Labour governments.

But as we do not know what Labour's policies will be in detail if it wins government - and the detail is all-important - it is hard to see what the effect will be on the market. To help fill this gap, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors has recently collected Labour's suggestions, as a list of brief

points, in a pamphlet on "Labour's Agenda for Property".

To start with the current market. Across the country agents selling good properties face a perplexing imbalance of supply and demand, especially in London and the south east. There, too many buyers are chasing too few good houses.

John Lowe, of agents Bidwells, says it is the worst he has known since 1972. That was when the modern dynamic market succeeded one where prices had hardly risen since 1900. This means that when a good property does come up, buyers have to compete (perhaps through best and final offers, or private auctions). Thanks to bonuses and the cheery stock market, many are ready to pay cash and, perhaps in desperation to move, the final price can shoot up.

Otley Hall, in Suffolk, is a typical story. It is a Grade I, medieval, moated hall which Strutt & Parker sold for £750,000 after just four weeks for around 25 per cent above the guide price. Similar stories abound.

Possible sellers hold back because they are not able to find a replacement home, thus exacerbating the shortage. Even agreed sales are going sour for this reason, Lowe notes.

Press reports of large premiums to guide price become another excuse for sellers to fidget, feeling that they will get more if they wait, because the market as a whole has gone up 20 or 25 per cent.

That idea is false, says Charles Ellingworth, of buying agent Property Vision. Those premiums relate only to what a specific property



Will this property change hands?

Anthony Ashwood

has achieved over the last comparable sale. Lowe, agreeing with this, suggests that increases achieved now - in a thin market - should ideally lead to vendors' capitalising on them. Then, as more sell, the market will calm down.

When that will happen is unclear. With the present level of frustrated demand, we must assume that the market will stay buoyant, regardless of a Labour victory bringing a cloudy spell.

Labour proposals that could affect the market include removing the 50 per cent reduction in council tax that landlords receive on empty properties. Ellingworth predicts a strong market in the summer, turning scalding in the autumn, followed by a long cooler period caused by a depression centred over Wall Street. Brave words.

Labour's proposal to tackle gazumping, forcing vendors to behave like gentlemen, will have more market impact psychologically than financially, as it can affect only a restricted number of cases. Serious changes in personal taxation would have a speedy effect on the market.

It is easy to see the tax breaks associated with reinvestment and rollover relief on capital gains, which have been a big force in the farm market, disappearing in the first budget of the new government.

If you have to sell fields, do it now, while prices are on a plateau and neighbouring farmers remain eager for more acreage.

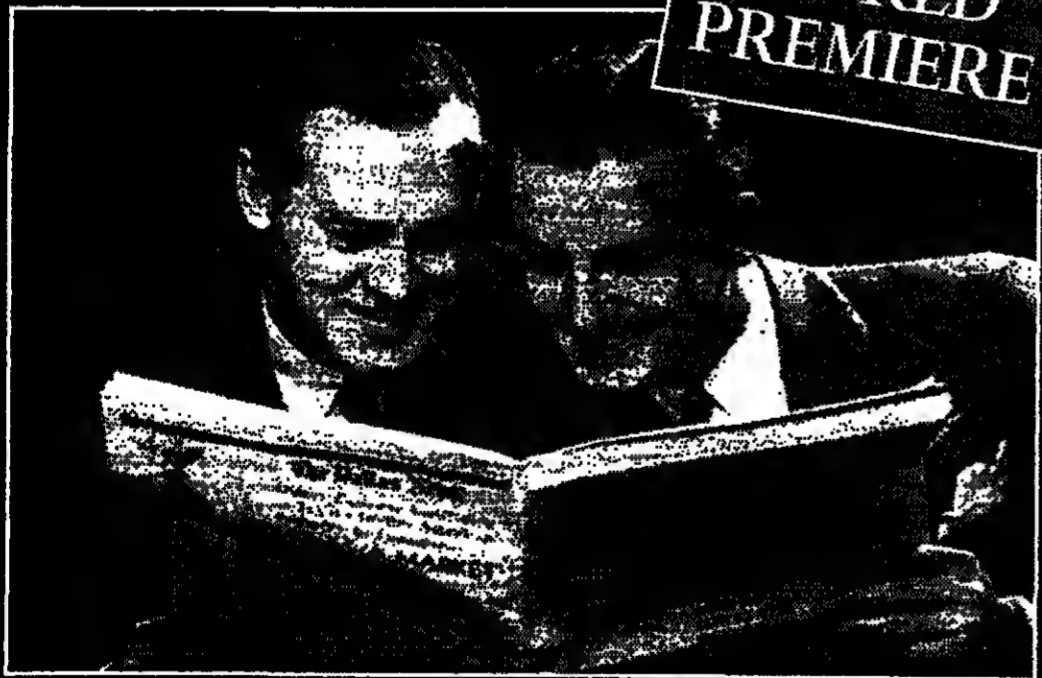
As for houses, there is no reason to delay selling for fear of the election, advises James Laing of Strutt & Parker. He says there is every reason to take advantage of the shortage of supply and of buyers wanting to act before the election.

But only a few weeks are left. Happy Easter viewing.

■ The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, 12 Great George Street, Parliament Square, London SW1P 3AD. Tel: 0171-222 7000.

I don't believe it, it's happening this weekend!

WORLD PREMIERE



What?

The launch of 47 new studio, 1 & 2 bedroom luxury apartments available now

When?

Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd March 1997, 11am - 6pm

Where?

Swallow Court & Swift Lodge, Admirals Walk off Harrow Road, Maida Hill, London W9

PRICES FROM £120,000 - £360,000

REGALIAN

☎ 0171 289 3481 ☎ 0171 289 5381

The figures - and the newspaper headlines - speak for themselves. It seems clear that the residential property market is set for a period of sustained growth - steady according to today's cooler commentators, spectacular according to the more excitable. If so, then buying at this point in the cycle minimises risk and optimises your growth potential. Paragon Mortgages is a specialist lender which can help you make the most of the opportunity. We provide mortgages specifically designed for private landlords and residential property investors, offering up to 75% of purchase price and at rates as low as standard mortgages rates. Our service is fast, efficient and friendly: with experts on hand at our single, central office to answer your questions and respond to your needs, we can usually make a decision in principle within a day. To find out more, call the number below - or apply on-line via our website.

Has there ever been a better time to invest in residential property?

Call free 0800 375 777 www.paragon-mortgages.co.uk

Paragon Mortgages is part of the Paragon Group of Companies, an independent publicly listed company with mortgage assets under management in excess of £1 billion. We are a full member of the Council of Mortgage Lenders and a founding member of the Association of Residential Lending Agents "Buy-to-Let" scheme.

Paragon Mortgages Ltd, Registered in England No. 2337854. Registered office: St. Catherine's Court, Herbert Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B37 7YU. Typical example: You take out a mortgage of £50,000 on a repayment basis to purchase a property valued at £50,000. Interest would be charged at our Standard Variable Rate, currently 7.2% APR 7.4%. You would make you monthly repayments of £560.56, total amount payable £67,285.60. All loans subject to status, valuation and affordability.

paragon
mortgages

BUYING TO RENT

Investors look to the future by becoming landlords

The main obstacle to buying properties to rent has gone. Anne Spackman explains how letting can now be part of a savings strategy

Landlords are a changing breed. The archetypal bedsit owner who knocks on doors for the weekly rent is being replaced by the investor, whose rental property is part of a wider savings strategy.

Many of these investors have wanted to buy homes to rent for some time, but were put off by the punitive mortgage rates charged by lenders. The introduction of a Buy-To-Let package by Arla, the lettings industry's association, has removed that obstacle. It has also coincided with the return of confidence in the housing market.

The Arla scheme, launched last autumn, offers potential landlords help with purchasing a property to let, access to specifically designed mortgages and insurance policies, and a lettings and management service. The scheme's helpline took more than 5,000 calls in its first four months.

Direct borrowings in the four months to January are expected to be nearly £30m, making it a strong new growth area for lenders. As well as the five lenders associated with the scheme, other banks and building societies are starting to offer improved landlord packages. This increased competition is forcing lenders to be more flexible.

There is a growing acceptance that expected rental income can

be taken into account when calculating a landlord's ability to make repayments.

Halifax Mortgage Services, one of the Arla lenders, adds 50 per cent of the expected annual rental income to the borrower's personal income when calculating the loan.

As the business matures, flexibility is expected to increase on a number of other issues, such as whether or not the landlord must pay for the property to be managed by an Arla agent.

Lettings agents are advising investors to buy properties suitable for young professionals in their twenties, or people relocating to the area for work reasons. They recommend buying modern properties with low maintenance costs or small terraced houses in good condition, in locations convenient for public transport.

Rupert Dearden of Robert Jordan Associates, a leading lettings agent in the north west of England, says the new investors are generally fed up with other forms of savings.

"These are predominantly middle-class, professional people. They want something which is more than just a piece of paper telling them they have money in the bank," he says. "They are Peppercorn and Tessaed up to the hilt. Some are doing it as an alternative to a pension."

Contact the Arla Hotline on 01923-896353.

Meet three buyers who have taken the plunge...



'This is really a long-term investment'

Philip Meakin runs his own business, Challenger Chemicals, in Salford. He is buying a terraced house in Sale, where he lives.

"Buying a rental property is something I've always wanted to do, but the mortgage rates for investors were always too high. Then I read about the Arla scheme. We contacted Robert Jordan Associates, because we wanted someone from our area. They spent an hour with us, giving us an insight into the business."

"We looked in Altrincham, but the returns were lower than in Sale. A terraced house costing £68,000-£70,000 would only bring in £550 a month in rent. We are buying a two-bedroom terrace in Sale, which has a new kitchen and bathroom, for £49,000, which is likely to produce £450 a month in rent. It's a much better rate of return. Unlike most rental properties it's near the Metrolink stations, with a frequent service into Manchester."

"We approached the Skipton

Building Society in the first place, but their arrangement fee was more than £1,000. We didn't go straight to the Arla lenders, because they insisted you have an Arla agent to manage the property and we didn't want to make that commitment."

"In the end we went to an Arla lender, Mortgage Express, which offered us 5.89 per cent for five years. With that lender we could have five mortgages up to a maximum of £500,000. At the moment we haven't enough deposits. We are putting more down on our first property than we need to because we want to test the water."

"This is really a long-term investment. I'm 53 and I would like to retire when I'm 60. I can't get a pension together in the conventional way in the short time I've got, so I built up my deposit on the stock market and cashed it in. "I paid £850 for my own first house which was very similar to the one I'm buying now for £49,000. It's capital gain I'm looking for."

Picture: Newsteam

'It has been hassle free and there have been no void periods'

Ciaran McNamara is a young investment banker in London. He has bought two flats in new developments near the City of London, where he works.

"In 1995 I had a feeling that property prices were as low as they could be, interest rates were low and rental yields were very good."

"The area I was looking in, around Butler's Wharf, seemed to be developing in leaps and bounds. With the Jubilee Line coming, it seemed a sensible investment for the future. The other place I would consider buying is in ECL."

"I was up and running before the Arla scheme was launched. I

bought my first flat a year ago and completed in September. The prices I went in at were very good. I've already seen capital growth of 20 per cent and the yields have been in excess of 10 per cent."

"Let's hope it keeps going that way."

"I've done the whole thing

through Cluttons' Docklands office and it has all gone fantastically well."

"They gave me a realistic idea of the rents I would receive. I organised my finance through a broker."

"I've bought two-bedroom flats suitable for the corporate market which I furnished myself in

simple designs and colours. It has been totally hassle free and there have been no void periods."

"I was not a victim of the 1980s. I've heard a lot of other people talking about doing what I've done, but they haven't actually taken the jump, because they're still overjoyed about what happened then."

'In 20 years I will have a freehold house I have not had to pay for'

Raphael Wilkins, a civil servant in Bromley, Kent, is buying a 1960s house, costing £80,000 in his home town.

"The idea of having some money in a tangible asset has appealed to me for some time. When the Arla scheme was brought in, I was eager to take advantage of it. My primary investment aim is long-term capital growth. I'm taking out a 20-year mortgage for 85 per cent

of the value of the house with Halifax Property Services."

"I calculate that the rental income will virtually cover the costs initially and produce some income in a few years but the main thing is that in 20 years I will have a freehold house I have not had to pay for. That coincides with my retirement."

"I found the Arla advice extremely helpful. Andrew Reeves, the Arla lettings agent,

got me quotes from all the lenders and gave me totally impartial advice."

"The delays normally associated with house-buying seem to have been even worse than usual, probably because it's a new scheme. The final mortgage offer was slow to come through. I don't have vast sums, but if I could, I'd like to buy another house in a few years."

Picture: Tony Andrews

SAVILLS

INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS



BERKSHIRE, Sunninghill

Ascot 1.6 km (1 mile).
Central London 44.8 km (28 miles), M25 12.8 km (8 miles).

An impressive Georgian House with beautiful mature gardens and grounds.

Hall, 3 reception rooms, study, master suite of bedroom, dressing room and bathroom, 5 further bedrooms, 2 further bathrooms. Indoor swimming pool. Hard Tennis court. Mews comprising 2 bedroom cottage, staff flat, extensive garaging. Thatched dairy. Beautiful formal gardens. Fenced paddocks.

About 6.63 ha (16.5 acres)

Knight Frank, Asst: 01344 24732

Savills, London: 0171 499 8644 Contact: Paul Finnegan

e-mail: paul.finnegan@savills.co.uk



SURREY, Petersham

Richmond 2.4 km (1.5 miles). Central London 14.4 km (9 miles).

One of the finest properties in the Richmond area. A magnificent late 17th century Grade II* house close to Richmond Park.

Reception hall, 3 reception rooms, master suite of bedroom, boudoir, dressing room and bathroom, 2 guest suites, dressing/shower room, 5 further bedrooms, bathroom, 2/3 bedroom annexe, guest/staff flat, squash court, excellent range of outbuildings. Mature gardens with swimming pool.

About 1 ha (2.5 acres)

Savills, London: 0171 499 8644 Contact: Ian Stewart

e-mail: ian-stewart@savills.co.uk



GLoucestershire, Alderley

Wotton-under-Edge 3.2 km (2 miles).
Bristol 37.6 km (23.4 miles), M5 Junction 14 12 km (7.5 miles).

An excellent commercial dairy farm.

Period 7 bedroom farmhouse, bungalow, 2 cottages. Traditional barns with planning consent for residential conversion, 280 Cow dairy unit, 331.37 acres, 1,453,775 litres of milk quota at 3.73% butterfat available separately.

Available as a whole or in lots

Excess of £1.5 million

Savills, Bath: 01225 474510 Contact: Philip French

e-mail: philip-french@savills.co.uk



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, Gt Missenden

London 48 km (30 miles), Aylesbury 7 km (4.5 miles).

A high quality sporting, residential and equestrian estate in the heart of the Chilterns.

Grade II* listed manor house, Lodge house and nursery, 3 staff flats, 2 farm cottages, farm buildings, and excellent pheasant shoot. Self contained Stud (manager's house, 24 loose boxes, post and rail paddocks).

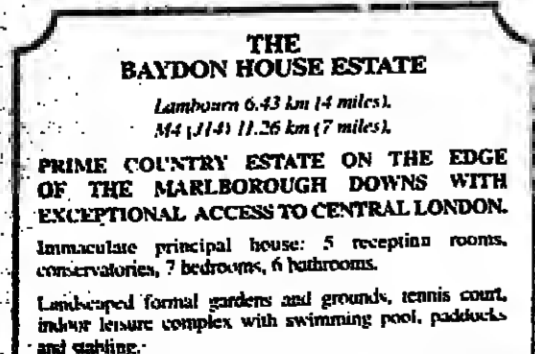
In All About 250 ha (617 acres)

Brown & Co: 01284 725715 Contact: Robert Fairley

Savills, London: 0171 499 8644 Contact: Alex Lawson

e-mail: bry@brown-co.com

e-mail: alex-lawson@savills.co.uk



THE BAXDON HOUSE ESTATE

Lambourn 6.43 km (4 miles).
M4 (J14) 11.26 km (7 miles).

PRIME COUNTRY ESTATE ON THE EDGE OF THE MARLBOROUGH DOWNS WITH EXCEPTIONAL ACCESS TO CENTRAL LONDON.

Immaculate principal house: 5 reception rooms, conservatories, 7 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms.

Landscaped formal gardens and grounds, tennis court, indoor leisure complex with swimming pool, paddocks and stabling.

2 Farmhouses, 5 cottages, extensive range of modern and traditional buildings.

Productive in hand farm. Woodland.

Established shoot.

About 445 ha (1100 acres)

Available as a whole or in 5 lots

Savills, London: 0171 499 8644

Contact: Justin Marking/Alex Lawson

e-mail: alex-lawson@savills.co.uk



ST JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON, NW8

A luxurious development of 33 apartments and penthouses refurbished in an exemplary standard. Benefiting from private communal gardens and underground parking.

Prices from £203,000 - £771,000

SHOW APARTMENT

OPEN THIS WEEKEND 11am - 6pm

Savills, Hampstead: 0171 431 4844 Contact: Noel De Keyser

e-mail: noel-de-keyser@savills.co.uk



HURLINGHAM, LONDON, SW6

Superb 3 storey, semi-detached family house offering excellent living and entertaining accommodation.

Entrance hall, drawing room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, master bedroom with en suite bathroom, 5 further bedrooms, 2 further bathrooms, cellar, garden, off street parking.

Offers in excess of £800,000

Savills, Fulham: 0171 731 2818

Contact: Lindsay Cuthill

e-mail: lindsay-cuthill@savills.co.uk



HAMPTON COURT HOUSE

Heathrow Airport 14.4 km (9 miles).
Central London 19.2 km (12 miles).

BEST OFFERS INVITED FOR THIS IMPORTANT PROPERTY

BY FRIDAY 18th APRIL 1997

Requiring refurbishment and offering considerable potential.

Superb gardens and grounds.

About 3.4 ha (8.5 acres)

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £1.8 MILLION

Savills, London: 0171 499 8644 Contact: Paul Finnegan

e-mail: paul.finnegan@savills.co.uk



Savills Galbreath Offices & Associations Worldwide

SAILS AND SALES

What price a ship-shape berth on the waterfront?

Gerald Cadogan consults his land-lubber's log and finds it is time to go down to the sea again

It was the first day of spring yesterday - a time for some folk - sailors or otherwise - to buy property by the water.

Thanks to the regeneration of old industrial and commercial space, the choice of waterside properties is no longer restricted to traditional sailing areas. Water-folk can nowadays live next to the boat at, say, the marina in the old harbour at Penarth in Cardiff Bay or in Chelsea Harbour on the Thames.

In King's Cross, in north central London, viewing starts in May at an new loft-type waterside development called Ice Wharf on the Regents Canal. The architect for the conversion is Tchak Chassay and it offers private moorings in its Narrowboat Marina. Prices will start at around £125,000. The agent is Alan Selby.

People often choose waterside homes just to be able to look at the water. They have an extra sense of peace and freedom, something is always happening and the view is free of cars.

Two riverside developments have an extra attraction. They are next to elegant suspension bridges. Albert Bridge is on the south bank of the Thames in London by the bridge of that name (flats are from £495,000 to £700,000, and penthouses start at £1.6m). Haven Banks, where a second floor flat is on offer for £32,950 (Fulford), is beside a foot bridge over the Exe at Exeter.



Ice Wharf at King's Cross: an intriguing development

West Sussex and Hampshire are always popular as they offer good sailing close to London. A well-placed house with frontage on Chichester Harbour, and access at all states of the tide, can carry a premium of up to 50 per cent over a similar house away from the water, says Richard Willis of agent Henry Adams. If the house has a good view of the water but no frontage, a 25 per cent premium is possible.

Two houses the firm is selling on Chichester Harbour are Salt Mill House in Fishbourne (£550,000), dating from 1645, and The Homing of 1936 at Bosham (£565,000), whose famous church appears in the Bayeux Tapestry. At £173,000 is a new house in Chequers Quay, a well-designed courtyard development fronting on to Slipper Pond at nearby

Emsworth (Jackson-Stops). Ross House at Lee-on-the-Solent is a dashing late Victorian pile which the grocery magnate Sir Thomas Lipton built at the mainland end of the Royal Yacht Squadron's starting line, after the squadron blackballed him. Here he checked that nobody jumped the starting gun, telegraphing the squadron if they did. After some years of this and success with J class yachts, the squadron let him in. The house costs £375,000 (GA Town & Country).

A few miles away, the 1920s Sea House near Titchfield fronts on to the Solent where it joins Southampton Water and has a garden down to the beach (John D Wood, £550,000). Across the Water, Curlew Mead is a substantial early 20th century house on the Beaulieu river with a jetty (Paul Jackson, offers over £1m).

In east Devon, The Look Out at Branscombe, converted out of old coastguard cottages, has a glorious setting above a long pebble beach (Humberts, £335,000).

At Salcombe, Marchand Petit is selling a house converted out of a boatmen's store at Cookes Quay, with a mooring alongside the quay, for £184,000 (to include furnishings) and, for £275,000, the top part of the 1902 Bar House - a sailors' landmark on the rocks above the bar at the entrance to Salcombe harbour.

In south Cornwall are Long Loft, a converted net loft on the cliffs overlooking the cove of Cadgwith (near



Chequers Quay, a well-designed courtyard development fronting on to Slipper Pond at Emsworth, West Sussex



Fellside in five acres above Dorset Water in the Lake District



Jetty at the bottom of the garden: the Lodge, Angelsey

Helston) where crab and lobster fishing still flourishes (Miller, £350,000), and Carriknash on the harbour at St Mawes, with a public slipway by the house. (Miller & Son, no guide price).

Fresh on the market is Trerose, a small estate of 28 acres on the Helford river near Falmouth, with a boat-

house on Porthallack cove. (Knight Frank, £1.5m-£2m.)

In Anglesey, The Lodge, once the gatehouse for the Bishop of Bangor's palace and now enlarged, looks at Snowdonia across the Menai Straits - and has a jetty at the bottom of the garden (John Berry or Jackson-Stops in Chester, £295,000).

In the North West, prosperous-Edwardian Fellside sits in five acres above Dorset Water in the Lake District, with superb views over the lake to Keswick and Skiddaw beyond (Cluttons, £375,000). And in Liverpool, Crosby Homes, part of the Berkeley Group, has a dock-

lands scheme at Coburg Quay on South Ferry Island. Viewing starts in autumn. Flats range from £73,950 and houses from £141,950 (Sykes Waterhouse).

Take the road to Loch Lomond for Tarbet House, built in the 1960s. Savills in Edinburgh asks for offers over £250,000 for the house, and over £20,000 for boat-

house, slipway and mooring. Finally, on the Norfolk Broads, Savills in Norwich is selling Sheerwater, a thatched house right on the water with a large wood landing stage and a wet boat house (£325,000).

■ Henry Adams, Chichester (01243-533377); Albert Bridge, London (0171-801 9559); John Berry, Beaumonts (01248-810101); Cluttons, Corfisle (01228-74792); Fulford, Exeter (01392-411255); GA Town & Country, Lee-on-the-Solent (01705-550113); Humberts, Honiton (01404-24561); Paul Jackson, Lynton (01590-674111); Jackson-Stops, Chester (01244-323561) and Chichester (01243-76316); Knight Frank, Exeter (01392-421111); Marchand Petit, Kingsbridge (01549-875555); Miller, Truro (01872-742111); Miller & Son, Liskard (01579-344101); Savills, Edinburgh (0131-226 6961) and Norwich (01603-612111); Alan Selby, London (0171-613 3055); Sykes Waterhouse Black Horse Agencies, Liverpool (0151-734 2200); John D Wood, Winchester (01962-863131).

REGALIAN

SOLD

SOLD

ALBERT BRIDGE

0171 801 9559

LUXURY APARTMENTS

ALBERT BRIDGE

0171 801 9559

MONACO

MONTE-CARLO

No personal taxation or property taxes

Invest in LE GARDEN HOUSE - 8 apartments remaining for sale. Completed December 1996, superb sea view, air conditioning, luxury finishes. A selection of luxury apartments for sale and to let in the PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO. Information available on residence application procedure and personal taxation advantages, multilingual staff at your service.

John Taylor & Son

ESTATE AGENTS AGENTS IMMOBILIERS

MICHEL PASTOR Group 20 Bd des Moulins, MC98000 MONACO Tel: (377) 93 50 30 Fax: (377) 93 25 86 72

SOOTHERY'S

INTERNATIONAL REALTY

HURFORD SALVI CARR

CITY

Large 2 bed flat in new Georgian conversion 2nd Floor Close to Fenchurch Street £250,000

BARBICAN

1 Bed duplex, 3rd & 4th floors. South facing balcony. £125,000

CLERKENWELL

Spectacular loft with gallery, 2 bedrooms. 16ft ceiling, 1500 sq ft. must be seen. £425,000

BLOOMSBURY SQ

Luxury 2 bed flat bathroom & shower room. 4th floor & Porter £249,500

CLERKENWELL

New 2 bed flat. Close to Smithfields. Maple floors £199,000

BARBICAN

Fully modernised 4 bed flat 8th floor, views over garden & lake. £210,000

COVENT GARDEN

3000 Sq Ft. freehold house in need of refurbishment. £750,000

CLERKENWELL

Duplex penthouse views from terrace, loft style. 2 bed. £300,000

Tel: 0171 250 1012 Fax: 0171 250 1015

FULHAM SW6

2 BEDROOM FITTED OUT APARTMENT 116 sq m (1,252 sq ft) ENJOYING RIVER VIEWS. Ready January 1998. £299,950 Tel: 0171 736 3671

WIMBLEDON, HEART OF VILLAGE

Substantial F/H Family Home. Master suite + 5 beds, 2 baths, 2 receps, study, kitchen, cellar, C/OE + oil central heating. 60ft 5th floor garden. NO AGENTS. Private Sale. In excess of £725,000 inc. Tel: 0181 947 4774

HOUSES, FLATS AND STADIUMS

The anthem for Euro '96, "Football's Coming Home" rang around the UK when England played host to the European Championships. The competition was an important milestone in the transformation of English football from hooligan-ridden sport to glamorous leisure activity. Now, that process has evolved to such an extent that homes are coming to football.

Chelsea Football Club is redeveloping its Stamford Bridge ground into a huge complex containing flats, restaurants, offices, a hotel and a large health and fitness club. The only area proving awkward to capitalise on is the pitch itself.

The flats are being built directly behind the south stand and around the entrances to the ground on the Fulham Road. Mostly one-bedroom properties, they are selling for between £165,000 and £220,000. The penthouses start at £295,000. Ken Bates, Chelsea's flamboyant chairman, has reserved the most prominent for himself.

It is a far cry from the rows of old terraced houses which usually line the perimeters of England's football clubs. Their residents have had to live with the noise and inconvenience of tens of thousands of fans passing their front doors every other Saturday from August until May - not to mention a few evenings and Sundays as well.

Will prospective buyers at Chelsea Village feel this is too big a drawback for such an expensive home? Or can they be convinced that being so near the ground is a positive asset?

What makes Chelsea different from its football counterparts is its location. Wedged between the Fulham Road and Old Brompton Road, spitting distance from the King's Road, it is in one of west London's fashionable locations. Fulham itself is enjoying a period of sharp price rises. Prices of flats have gone up by around 15 per cent in the past 12 months, according to Savills, and there is very little on the market to buy.

In terms of location Chelsea Football Club has more



Stamford Bridge, Chelsea: the only area proving awkward to capitalise on is the pitch itself

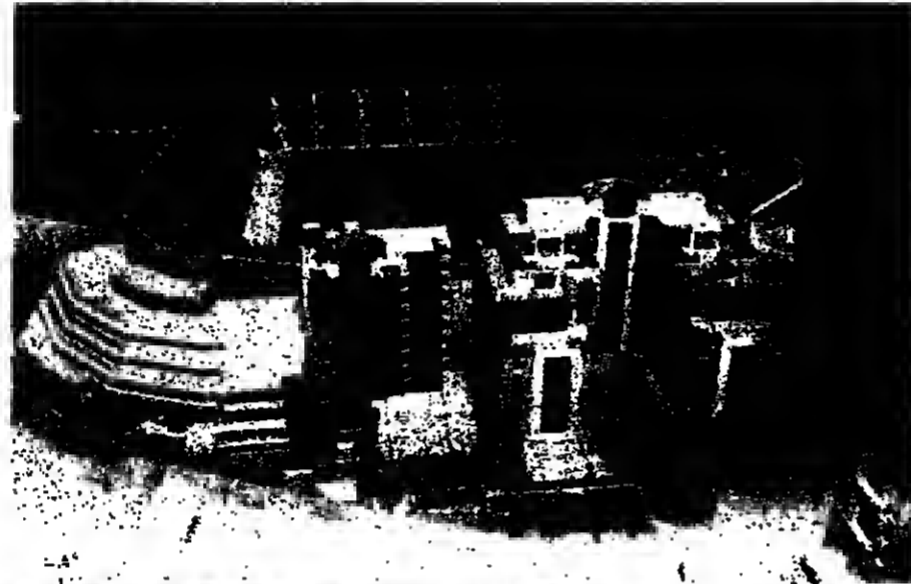
At home with the in-crowds

Anne Spackman on the pros and cons of living near a big sporting attraction

In common with the rugby stadium at Murrayfield in Edinburgh or the All England Lawn Tennis Club at Wimbledon, both situated in prime residential areas, than with the average English football club.

Murrayfield is also currently the site of big housing developments, with both Cala Homes and Bryant building around the ground. Cala has used the rugby association as a marketing tool, naming its development Hastings Gardens after Scotland's international brothers Scott and Gavin Hastings.

Across the road, Bryant has named its large development of 170 flats Herriot Square, after the brewery which was formerly on the site. All the 30 flats released in the first phase have sold, and the eight released in the second phase have all gone prior to the building being completed. Prices are mainly in the region of £90,000-£110,000 for two and three bedroom flats.



A far cry from the traditional terraces: a model of Chelsea Village

The selling agents, DTZ Debenham Thorpe, said the vast majority of buyers were choosing the development because of its style and location in one of Edinburgh's

most desirable districts. One or two flats have been sold to buyers wanting a pied à terre in Edinburgh, who see the rugby ground as an added bonus, but for most it

is irrelevant. Graeme McCallum of DTZ said Murrayfield was only a big sporting venue for the two weekends of the Five Nations Championship.

"Even then, the crowds have a reputation for being a jolly, friendly bunch," he says. It is also used for American Football games, and two rugby clubs use some of its facilities, but they have no impact on the people living in the area.

In Wimbledon the impact of the tennis tournament is similarly short-lived and potentially advantageous. Families move to Wimbledon for the big houses, green spaces and good schools. John D Wood has just sold a Victorian house needing total modernisation in Somerset Road, near the All England Club, for nearly £1m. A 1940s detached house in Bathgate Road has just gone for well over its guide price of £265,000.

For tennis fans, proximity to the club is a bonus. They can queue early for the tickets sold on the day, or even rent out their drive as a car park for visitors. Those who prefer to stay away during the Wimbledon fortnight can

rent their houses out to players for prices which run into thousands of pounds a week.

With football, the scale of the sporting operation is entirely different. In any normal season there are likely to be around 20 home games. Extended cup runs, such as Chelsea has enjoyed this season, or European competition, will push that figure up.

With two of its stands being redeveloped, Chelsea currently holds 28,500 fans. When it is complete, the ground will hold 43,000. Those fans will pass through entrances, two of which are directly next to the two smaller residential blocks.

One of those is Bovril Court, a block of eight two-bedroom flats. With the building not yet out of the ground, Savills has sold all eight properties, six of them to investors who will let them out. Savills estimates the small two-bedroom flats will attract rents of £300-£375 a week. They have been sold

for between £160,000 and £210,000.

Clearly the concept is proving popular with buyers - but the first wave are not buying somewhere where they will actually live. The test of that will come in the main residential blocks.

Most of the flats at Chelsea Village are in a large apartment block, with parking and underground car parking. In addition there are three floors of flats on top of the hotel, plus a smaller block at Stamford Gate. Savills says the scheme has proved the most attractive of the new developments. It is currently selling in west London. There have been inquiries on the Internet from Cyprus and Hong Kong, as well as interest from British buyers.

David Prole of Savills says residents will either spend Saturday afternoons at the game, or go shopping and leave Stamford Bridge to the fans. With car parking spaces a compulsory extra in the package, costing £1,500 per year, they at least will not find their cars hijacked in, as they might in the streets around a north London ground, for home games.

In addition to the flats, they will have restaurants or their own. One will be a pub, the restaurant, as opposed to the multitude of Irish pubs and bars springing up around the capital. A new one will be a sports bar, near Chelsea's famous 19th century The Shed. The other will be an Italian restaurant, near Canaletto's and the nearby smart fish and chip house. "We want it to be the Chelsea Garden of west London," says Alan Shaw, Chelsea's group secretary.

Chelsea Village has been talked about for years. Now it is finally coming to the drawing board at the stadium time. Football is a fashionable and Chelsea, with its charismatic manager, Claudio Gullit, is one of its most glamorous clubs.

At the same time the property market is surging in London. If any Chelsea club can sell flats on the site of its ground it is Chelsea now.

Chelsea Village sales office: 0171-385 2496; DTZ Debenham Thorpe, Edinburgh: 0131-459 2282; John D Wood, Wimbledon: 0181-944 1122.

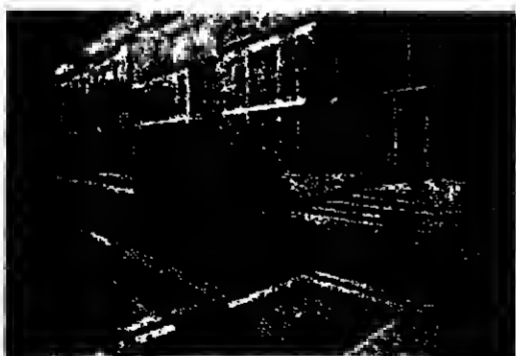
LONDON PROPERTY

Potentially - the best location in London.

The Water Garden is located on Narrow Street, one of Limehouse's most historic and picturesque thoroughfares. The development is set between The River Thames and Limehouse Basin Marina. Canary Wharf is approximately 10 minutes' walk away via a new riverside path. Regular DLR services of approximately 10 minutes travelling time run into Bank from nearby Limehouse station.



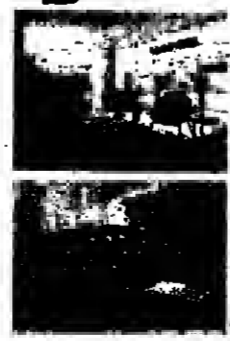
Probably - the finest architecture.



Designed by award-winning architect Ian Ritchie, The Water Garden is an architectural masterpiece arranged around a hidden, private courtyard with a water garden. A study in stylish, stripped classicism, it is a truly unique development, the design quality of which is seldom seen on the London market.

Undeniably - outstanding value.

A wide variety of apartments from studios to large, three bedroom split-level penthouses. Each features a luxury, streamlined specification including fully fitted kitchens, and classic bathrooms. Most apartments have balconies or terraces.



Incredibly - FOR SALE from only £60* per week

Luxury apartments set around a private water garden on Docklands' most desirable riverside street. Studios from £64,995 (mortgage repayments £40 p.w.); 1-bed apartments from £74,995 (mortgage repayments £50 p.w.); 2-bed apartments from £99,995 (mortgage repayments from £60 p.w.).



Mortgage repayment example, based on a mortgage which you arrange. Example quoted assumes a purchase price of £99,995, and an advance of 95% from the Nationwide Building Society at a fixed rate of 5.49% (APR 5.78) until January 1st 1999. In addition the repayment quoted reflects the benefit of a subsidy provided by the vendor. This offer is subject to availability, and can be withdrawn at any time.

COUNTRY PROPERTY

CLARKE & SIMPSON

SUFFOLK

Nr Woodbridge

Fine Victorian country house in lovely well timbered surroundings with good views over adjoining countryside. 6 beds, 2 baths, Coach House, former grass tennis court, gardens and paddock. About 3.8 acres. Region £330,000. Ref 1279.



Nr Stowmarket

Newly renovated Grade II listed Hall House in parklike grounds of 24 acres. 5 beds, 4 baths, substantial timbered barn, Coach House, Granary and modern barn. Moated gardens and land. Region £385,000. Ref 1304.



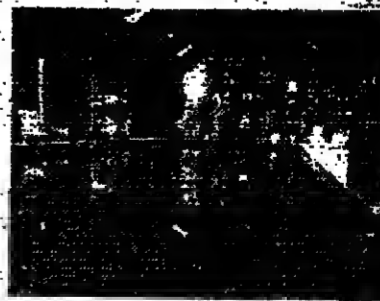
Tel: 01728 724200 or Fax 724667

Maenporth

EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OWNERSHIP IN CORNWALL

Maenporth is a unique leisure development of prestigious holiday homes situated on one of the most breathtaking stretches of coastline in Cornwall.

- Panoramic views over sandy cove
- 29 Acres of beautifully landscaped and maintained gardens
- Extensive leisure complex • Two tennis courts
- Quality restaurant
- Luxury 2 & 3 bedroom properties - available from £95,000



PILKINGTON
Tel: 01326 250000

RELOCATION FIFE

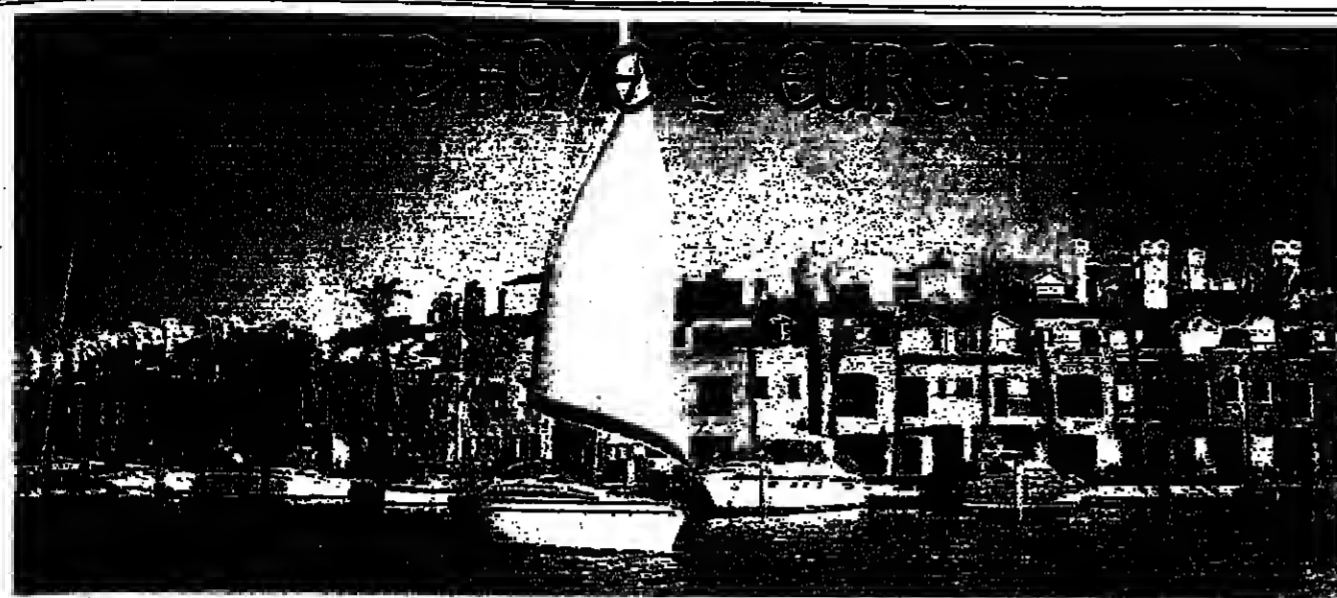
MOVING TO THIS FINE AREA AND A LOT MORE...

WE CAN HELP FIND YOUR IDEAL PROPERTY.
FOR EXPERT, INDEPENDENT, FRIENDLY ADVICE

Tel/Fax: 01337 870302

01337 870302

INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY



RIBERA DEL CANDIL

ISLA DEL BARBERO

ISLA DEL MUSICO

ISLA DE LA DONCELLA



RIBERA DEL ARLEQUIN

RIBERA DEL PAYASO

This September, the Ryder Cup is being played in Sotogrande, in Southern Spain, on the Valderrama course. With three other golf courses, tennis, sailing, beach clubs, shops, an hotel, bars, restaurants and a school, Sotogrande has a unique life and style.

Sotogrande, S.A. the owners and developers, have superb villas in the hills overlooking the golf courses. Prices range from £168,000 to £500,000. (All prices subject to exchange rates.)

The stunning new marina village has islands and peninsulas with moorings at the end of your garden. Apartments are from £90,000 to £342,000.

There's a specialist real estate division and our rental department can find you the ideal home to rent.

Sales and information:

Tel direct: 0171 351 2385 Fax: 00 3456 790 350

Rentals and services:

Tel: 00 3456 790 155 Fax: 00 3456 790 156



RYDER CUP 1997

LONDON PROPERTY

The Directors of Chelsea Village plc
announce the construction of

Luxury Apartments in Chelsea Village, SW6

In the grounds of Chelsea Football Club

- Prime central location
- Off road position
- Luxury specification
- Estate security
- NHBC warranty
- 350 metres from Fulham Broadway
- Underground
- Secure underground parking available
- Proposed leisure centre

Set back from Fulham Road, just 46, new luxury apartments are being built in the internationally renowned setting of the grounds of Chelsea Football Club. Each apartment is designed to the highest specification. Secure parking.

1 bedroom apartments
from £162,000 - £205,000

SAVILLS

471 Fulham Road, London SW6
(opposite main gates)

Sales office open daily 11.00am - 7.00pm, weekends 11.00am - 5.00pm

0171 385 2496

CHELSEA VILLAGE

Stamford Bridge, Fulham Road, London SW6 1HS
Internet: <http://www.propertyfinder.co.uk/chelsea>



RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO APPRECIATE THE BETTER THINGS IN LIFE



2 AND 3 BEDROOM APARTMENTS WITH SUPERB VIEWS TOWARDS TEDDINGTON LOCK

This stunning new award-winning development of two and three bedroom apartments and magnificent penthouses enjoys superb views towards Teddington Lock and the River Thames.



Complete with moorings and even a private fitness centre, Teddington Wharf is the perfect place to enjoy a very special lifestyle.

Launch of Phase II this weekend. Visit our stunning new show apartment and make the dream a reality.



Our fabulous new showhome is now open from 10am to 6pm every day.

Prices from £169,000 to £598,000

Telephone 0181 977 3237

<http://www.stgeorgeplc.com>



A truly magnificent Penthouse overlooking Regent's Park

Newly constructed to reflect the splendour and elegance of this Edwardian building, with 24 hour security, porterage and parking.
5,740 sq ft • £3.5 million



HARLEY HOUSE

MARYLEBONE ROAD, REGENT'S PARK, LONDON NW1

The Penthouse may only be viewed by appointment through
Ian Franklin of White Druce & Brown 0171 290 7979
or Chris Mercer of Allsop & Co 0171 584 6106

HOMESEARCH

West Country House Search

Acting for buyers seeking to acquire
Country Houses or Estates in
DORSET, DEVON, SOMERSET, WILTSHIRE
GLOUCESTERSHIRE, HAMPSHIRE and CORNWALL.
Please contact Robert Hayman at:
West Country House Search
21 The Square, Beaminster, Dorset DT8 3AU.
Tel: (01308) 863889 Fax: (01308) 863890.
Mobile: (0836) 543021

AN INDEPENDENT, PERSONAL & COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE FOR THE BUYER.

Use the Internet to find houses & other
property from Britain's leading estate agents
www.propertyfinder.co.uk
Agent enquiries: Tel: 0171 371 6611
Email: ipf.admin@propertyfinder.co.uk



Use the Internet to find houses & other
property from Britain's leading estate agents
www.propertyfinder.co.uk
Agent enquiries: Tel: 0171 371 6611
Email: ipf.admin@propertyfinder.co.uk

**The Penthouse
Two Avenue Road
London, NW8**

A magnificent Penthouse apartment offering exceptional accommodation on the top three floors of one of London's most exclusive luxury blocks. Located opposite Regent's Park, the apartment and terraces cover approximately 8,000 sq ft and afford spectacular views of the London skyline.

14 bedrooms, 12 bath/shower rooms (8 en suite), large salon, 2 further reception rooms, dining room, kitchen, utility room, large terrace and two balconies. Central heating. Lift. 24 hr porterage. Underground parking.

Price on application
LEASEHOLD

St Johns Wood office
Tel: 0171 586 9595

KENWOOD, LONDON - NW11

An outstanding detached house with excellent leisure facilities, located in a highly regarded area close to Hampstead Village and the Heath.

Grand entrance hall, 4/5 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, 6/7 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, shower room. Indoor swimming pool with jacuzzi, sauna, lounge and kitchen areas. Carriage driveway. Rear garden with tennis court, terraces, lawns and waterfalls.

Freehold

Joint Selling Agents, Hamptons. Tel: 0171 794 8222
Glentree Estates. Tel: 0181 458 7311

LONDON PROPERTY



THE LEXINGTON
ISLINGTON, EC1

Pure style, with stunning views in Islington, EC1.

Overlooking 11 acres of park, trees and greenery, London has never seen a development like The Lexington. Situated in Islington EC1, The Lexington is a landmark in every respect. Built using aluminium, glass and brick and with a specification that is possibly the highest and most stylish of any development on the market today, The Lexington is one of the most exhilarating developments ever seen in London. Come and see the excitement of The Lexington for yourself by visiting our CD Rom marketing suite. And look into your future now.

DE GROOT COLLIS

SAVILLS
INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

Developing the future...
Metropolis DEVELOPMENTS

1 & 2 BEDROOM APARTMENTS FROM £120,000 TO £289,950
PENTHOUSES FROM £355,000 TO £550,000
VIEWING BY APPOINTMENT ONLY, PLEASE CALL 0171 250 0414

SUSSEX MANSIONS
OLD BROMPTON ROAD, LONDON SW7



To Rent - Twelve unfurnished apartments

- Available from May 1997
- Spacious 2, 3 and 4 bedroom apartments (approximately 81m² to 237m²) from £450 to £1,000 per week
- Two furnished 1 bedroom flats (approximately 30m² and 35m²) from £250 per week
- Newly decorated and upgraded accommodation
- Porter, passenger lift
- Cable television and telephone outlets
- Close to South Kensington Underground station

CLUTTONS 71 Chester Avenue, London SW7 1, 2011
0171-584 5333

SAVILLS 119 Dover Street, London SW7 1X 1AY
0171-730 0822

Approx: 6,058 Sq Ft/563

RUTLAND GATE, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, SW7
'ONE OF THE FINEST FAMILY HOUSES IN KNIGHTSBRIDGE'

This magnificent ambassadorial residence has been immaculately renovated and interior designed by 'Michael Priest Design'. It provides gracious rooms for formal entertaining, generous bedrooms suites, garaging for two cars, and staff accommodation. Overlooking this quiet and picturesque garden square, it is ideally located for easy access to Harrods, and excellent amenities of Knightsbridge.



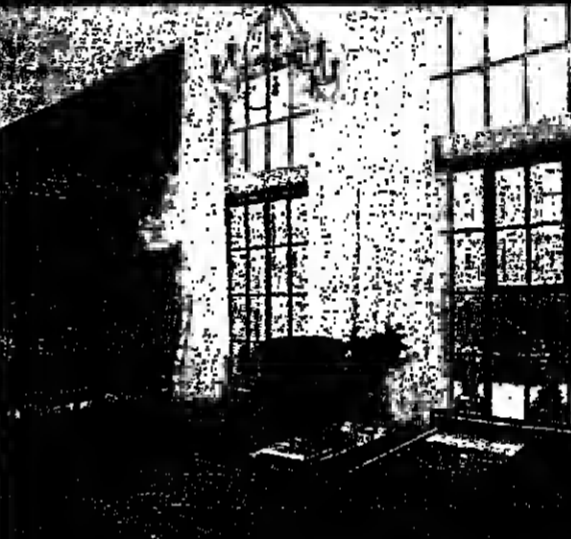
5 DOUBLE BEDROOMS : 3 ENSUITE BATHROOMS : LARGE ENTRANCE HALL : 1st FLOOR DRAWING ROOM : LARGE DINING ROOM WITH SERVING : MUSIC ROOM : FAMILY SITTING ROOM : 'GARDEN ROOM' : LUXURY KITCHENS : STAFF BEDROOM & BATHROOM

LARGE DOUBLE GARAGE (ENTRANCE MONTEPERIER WALK) : PASSENGER LIFT : GAS CENTRAL HEATING : BALCONY : DUMB WAITER : ENTRY PHONE

FREEHOLD Offers in the region of £5 MILLION are invited.

SOLE AGENTS
HOBART SLATER
40 Grosvenor Street, London W1A 3AB
Tel: 0171-581 8277 Fax: 0171-681 9206

High Style warehouse apartments ideal for The City and Canary Wharf



Spacious studios and 1 & 2 bedroom apartments, in the centre of Wapping with secure car parking, portage and for immediate occupation.

Prices from
£105,000 to £439,000

www.propertyfinder.co.uk/chimneycourt

0171 488 9586

23 BREWHOUSE LANE WAPPING LONDON E1

WAPPING - E1

DEMAND.

(Will exceed supply. Visit before prices rise!)



Is the demand for these new apartments due to the fact they're within walking distance of St. Katharine's Yacht Haven, Tower Bridge and the City? Is it the sophisticated specification, or the view over the delightful water basin which makes the scintillating new one and two bedroom homes so popular?

Visit the showhome this weekend and judge for yourself. High demand can mean rising prices and limited choice. So hurry!

Hermitage Waterside, Thomas More Street, London E1.

Easily commutable: minutes from the City. New one and two bedroom apartments from £134,000 and £181,000.

Sales office open every day, 10am to 6pm (Monday 2pm to 6pm).

Telephone: 0171 480 6192.
<http://www.ukip.co.uk/hermit>

All cities within this advertisement are available on selected properties for a limited period only. Subject to status, contract and availability.

BARRATT
Britain's Premier House Builder

THE DORDOGNE - FRANCE

Impressive and charming neo-perigordian house near famous Montignac-Lascaux which has all services.

- In perfect order
- Panoramic views
- Drawing room 73m²
- Enormous fireplace
- Oak beams
- Sleeps ten
- Large pool and jacuzzi

PP 3,700,000

Ask for colour brochure. Fax: (33) 5 53 50 56 28 Tel: (33) 5 53 50 56 18

Lyford Cay NASSAU, BAHAMAS



Charming Colonial style Family Home, Guest House and office or staff unit. Modern and superbly maintained. Deepwater Dock, Subtropical garden. Pristine quiet community. Landing, primary and junior school. No income or inheritance taxes. \$3,100,000.

Fax: 001 809 362 5171 for details


LUXURY COUNTRY HOUSE APARTMENTS

London 27 miles - Heathrow 13 miles

Lutyens mansion set in 17 acres of grounds, in the heart of Buckinghamshire



NASHDOM
NASHDOM LANE, BURNHAM, BUCKS



In the final years of the last century the Russian Prince Alexis Dolgorouki commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to build Nashdom, at Burnham in Buckinghamshire. This Grade II* listed mansion is now being restored as a limited number of luxury apartments set in 17 acres of private land, in the heart of Buckinghamshire.



DIRECTIONS

M4, junction 7, left in Maidenhead on A4. At Sainsbury's roundabout two right into Lent Rise Road, leading into Taplow Common Road. Nashdom is approx 1.5 miles on the right. M40, junction 2, A335 to Slough, A4 to Maidenhead, then as above.



- Unique, historic building
- Many period features and finishes
- Magnificent country views
- Luxury kitchens & bathrooms
- Video entry system
- Electronically operated gates
- Porter & 24 hour security
- Hard tennis court
- Heated outdoor swimming pool
- Workout gym
- Caravans & parking
- Lift

PRICES FROM
£195,000 - £325,000

SAVILLS
01628 663435

SHOW APARTMENT NOW OPEN
Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Monday 10.00am - 5.00pm

مكتبة

BARNES WATERSIDE • BARNES • LONDON SW13

A million miles from central London?



Just 5 miles from central London you'll find classically styled new homes that offer individuality and practical living in an environment that owes more to the country than it does to town. Homes designed to make the optimum use of space for practical family living, with an impeccable specification featuring high ceilings, luxury kitchens and bathrooms, high levels of security and insulation and a level of finish in keeping with homes of this calibre.

The final release of 5 bedroom waterside mansions are now available, priced from £850,000 to £1,200,000. Experience this difference at London's most exclusive riverside development by visiting our marketing suite and showhome, open daily from 10am to 6pm, (5pm weekends), telephone 0181 748 1748 (24 hours), fax 0181 748 7555.

Barnes Waterside

You have to see it to believe it

HOMES



**NUMBER ONE
PRESCOT STREET
LONDON E1**

a development by
Rialto
Remax

NUMBER ONE PRESCOT STREET

Offers a range of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom luxury apartments and penthouses, with secure private parking and a 24 hour concierge in an unparalleled location with excellent access for both the City, the West End and all major routes.

Prices from £135,000

HAMPTONS
Real Estate

For further information call FREE on
0800 0181515

Residential Property

Forthcoming supplements in 1997:

Saturday, June 28

Saturday, September 20

The Weekend FT publishes a residential property section every Saturday which contains full colour advertising for London, country and international property.

For further information on how to advertise in the weekly property pages or the 'Residential Property' supplements and reach over a million potential buyers, contact: Jon Banks Tel: +44 171 873 4744 Fax: +44 171 873 3098

MARATHON HOUSE

If you're thinking of investing in London property:

Go for a High Rise.

A development of luxury apartments and penthouses.

Every so often a building comes along which completely redefines London living. Marathon House is such a building.

With its bold design and sheer scale, Marathon House is all edges. Living here is a statement: a style of life that embraces the bold and the modern.

A selection of 2 and 3 bedroom luxury apartments will be available, as well as just four stunning penthouses. Each apartment has been refurbished to a high specification with an extensive range of interior features from strip wood flooring to chrome light fitting.

So why settle for the ordinary, when you can choose life with real edge?



Prices from £225,000
Penthouses from £2.2 million

Debenham
Thorpe
Residential

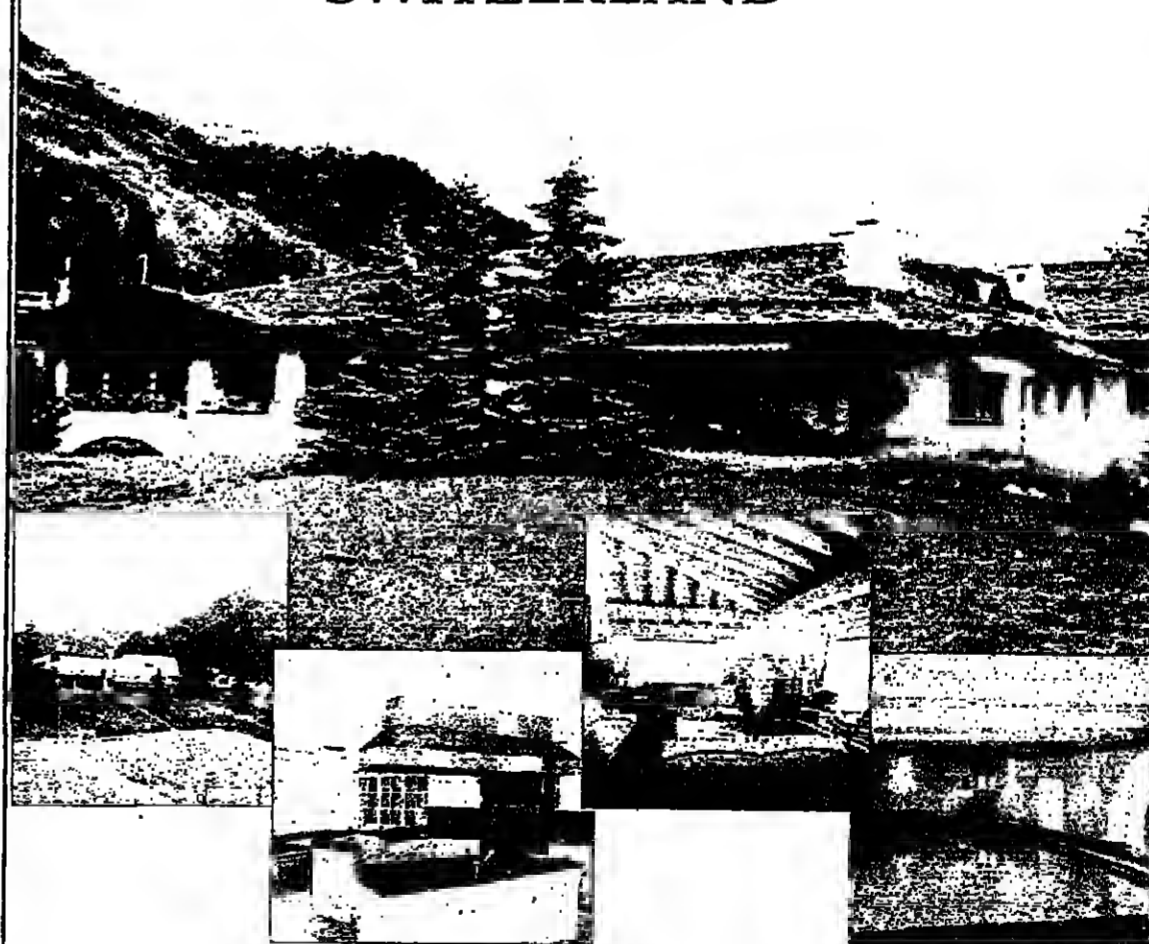
Herkeley
HOMES
NEW TO APPEAL

0171 408 1161

0171 677 777

* Prices correct at time of

DAVOS SWITZERLAND



PRESTIGIOUS PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE

Stunning view. Newly reformed chalet with elaborate wooden ceiling
4 reception rooms, 1 presidential suite
10 bedrooms with private bathrooms, 3 kitchens
Billiard-room, Swimming pool
Floodlight illuminated tennis court

9193m² gardens of which 3693m² construction ground for 1180m² apartments

Published by "Architectural Digest" in March 1994 under the category
"most beautiful houses in mountains"

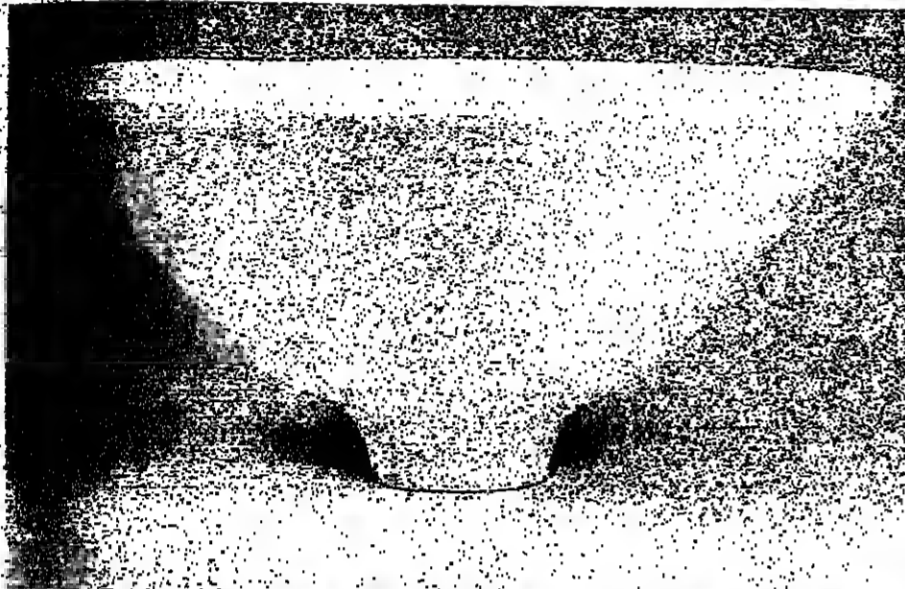
Viewing by appointment, strictly private sale

Phone: office hours: +41 1 392 0844 (for calls from Switzerland: 01 392 08 44)

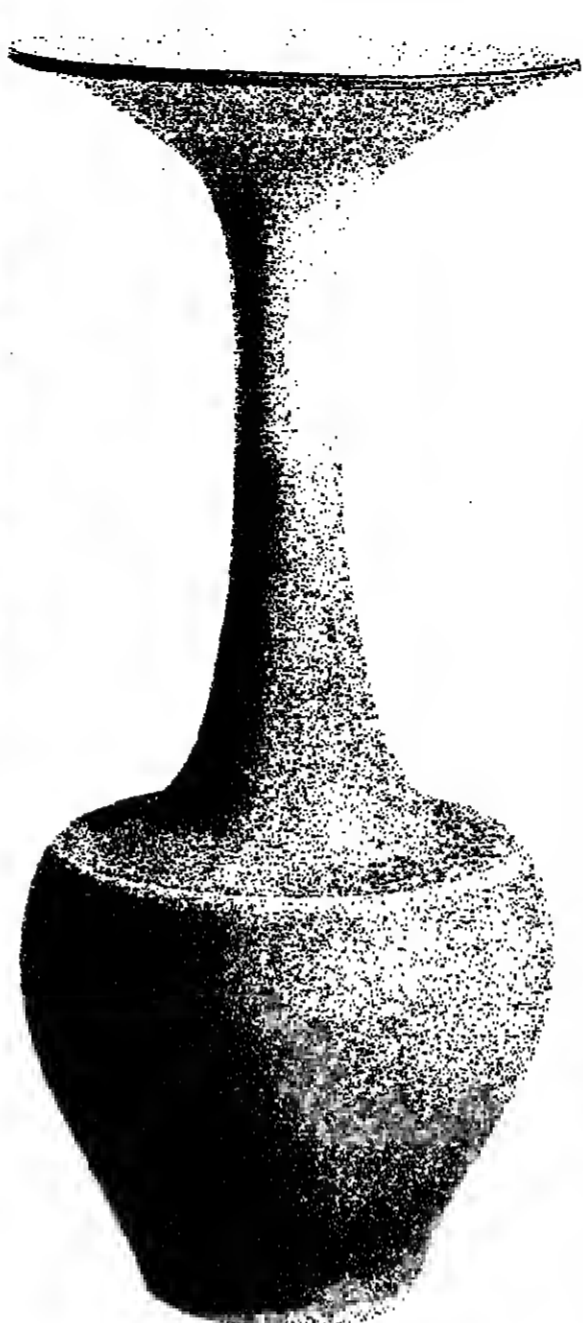
Write to Box R 5038, Financial Times, One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL

هذا منزل لاصول

HOW TO SPEND IT



Top: Lucie Rie at her pottery wheel. Above: One of Rie's delicate matt off-white glazes on a large footed central bowl, estimated to fetch between £8,000 and £12,000. Right: Typical of Rie's elegant, yet lyrical spirit, this porcelain bottle vase should realise between £4,500 and £6,000



Wheel of fortune turns

Lucia van der Post recalls the woman who redefined British pottery as a fine art

Lucie Rie, the great British potter who died two years ago, changed the way the British looked at pots. She managed to persuade many that, far from being simply indeterminate lumps of clay, pots could truthfully be defined as fine art.

With Bernard Leach and Hans Coper she formed a formidable triumvirate that brought British ceramics into the international arena. Behind the scenes, sitting quietly at their potter's wheels, they engendered a pioneering spirit, a sophistication, a delicacy on Rie's part and a masculine

strength on Coper's that changed the direction of British ceramics forever.

Through their work a new tradition – sparsely decorated, free of classical or historical references, dependent upon form and the qualities of the glaze and some surface texture for their effect – came to be understood.

Rie was a natural. While studying art history, drawing and painting in Vienna, she wandered into the ceramics department, sat down at the wheel and, as Cyril Frankel tells us in an excellent foreword to the catalogue accompanying a forthcoming Bonhams sale of her work, as soon as she felt the form of a rising vessel she was "lost to the wheel".

In the next 70 or so years of her life pots were to flow in a rich and maturing pattern from her wheel.

For years her pots were a private passion of many serious collectors – such as the late architect Sir Ove Arup, Lord Queensberry, Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury as well as humbler folk such as Dr Rollo Ballantyne, a national health GP and his wife who bought her work steadily through the years – but she gradually became widely sought after world-

wide. An exhibition of her work and that of Hans Coper at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1994-1995 brought a big following in the US.

Issey Miyake, the avant-garde Japanese fashion designer, became enamoured of her work and of her as a person – so much so he longed to make clothes for her. When he organised exhibitions in Tokyo and Osaka to introduce her work to the Japanese there were queues round the block to view them.

For those who know and love her work April 17 brings a rare opportunity to buy it – a collection of her work will be sold by auction at Bonhams which titles the catalogue "Sale of a Lifetime".

This could sound like hyperbole except for the fact that Lucie Rie is dead, that much of her work is already safely stored away in private collections and museums around the world and that what is for sale on April 17 are the pots, buttons and jewellery that were found in her workshop and showroom after she died.

Once these are sold, there will be no more pieces for sale except for those that come on the market from time to time when private owners decide to part with them.

Estimated prices (which are, of course, nothing more than guesses) will seem high to those not versed in the prices that fine pots fetch these days – there are a few simple plates and dishes available in the low hundreds (in particular two dishes with a beautiful egg-yolk yellow glaze estimated to go for between £450 and £800), some of the buttons (she survived in war-time Britain making ceramic buttons) are less than £100 but otherwise almost everything is priced in thousands.

So far, nobody who has bought a Lucie Rie pot has ever lost money on it – those who bought from her in the 1960s and 1970s have seen the prices they paid multiplied many times over.

Those who cannot afford to buy but are interested in the work should go along to look – it is a wonderful opportunity to see the range and depth of her work. There are the supremely delicate and sophisticated pieces that for many people define her best work, but there are also the more robust pieces with rougher textured surfaces that for others are just as authentic a part of the Rie legacy.

The catalogue alone is worth buying. Put together by Frankel – who first met her simply as a collector who loved and bought her work but became a close and trusted friend – it costs £15, gives a charming outline of the potter's life and is filled with many pictures of Lucie,

her family and friends as well as copious illustrations of the pieces for sale.

■ **Viewing at Bonhams, Knightsbridge, Montpelier Street, London SW7 1HH (tel: 0171 393 3900) is from Sunday April 13 to Thursday April 17.**

A virtuous shade of baby white

Fine linen – no problem, says Lucia van der Post

Sometime in the late summer of 1963 when Christian Rucker was a beauty writer on Harper's Queen magazine a friend, who is now her sister-in-law, happened to mention how difficult she found it to buy simple, good quality white household linens.

It wasn't long before Christian found herself giving in her notice, sourcing suppliers of fine quality white linens and running a mail-order venture of her own – her then fiancé and now husband Nick Wheeler, having started his own mail-order shirt business a few years earlier.

The virtues of white are so manifold and so obvious, that looking back it seems extraordinary that nobody thought of such a simple yet obvious idea before.

Be that as it may, The White Company (as Christian Rucker named her new "baby") seemed to find ready approval from all sorts of people who longed to have easy access to a whole range of white household goods – from plain Irish linen napkins and damask tablecloths to clean-lined white china and sweet lacy cushions.

And, of course, the prices helped. Quality for quality she was able to offer things such as plain linen sheets, thick white cotton bedspreads, linen damask hand towels, hand-embroidered white cotton duvet covers at prices at least a third cheaper than those to be found in retail shops.

From an initial mailing list of about 800 (mostly gleaned from the first article about the newly launched company printed on these pages) the list has now grown to more than 40,000.

All sorts of items have now been added from what the catalogue calls "houshold bottles" (frenching vessels for storing bath oils and scents)

and blankets to small presents such as cuff-links, business card holders, clocks and compact mirrors and, most recently, a charming iron bedstead.

Products are found as far afield as Portugal, Ireland, China, the north of England and Germany. But the backbone of the business, the things more buyers are

software programme for stock and database management as well as eight full-time members of staff and something like 120 orders a day are dispatched.

But the key new development is that since the company was first started, Christian married and had a baby so the inevitable now has happened and White Company Baby was born.

For any new mother (or grandmother, godmother or generous friend) the new collection is a Godsend. Here are many of the prettier things a household with a small baby needs – white hem-stitched cotton cot-sheets or white pique-bordered cot-sheets, white towels, soft blankets in pastel checks of blue or pink as well as an eminently useful "bumper" (a lining for a cot to protect the baby from bumping itself against the bars) which comes in plain white or edged in pink, yellow, green or blue gingham.

Bibs, huckaback hand-towels with *Salle de Bain* printed on them, and all manner of sweet extras such as padded hangers, nursery cushion covers and towels edged with appliquéd elephants are available, too.

A useful present for new mothers is the baby gift basket – for £34.99 there is a pique-covered basket filled with a hooded towel, Johnson & Johnson baby products and a teddy-bear.

New items will be introduced from time to time so anybody with a new baby who has had a surfeit of bunny-bedecked baby-wares should keep an eye on what the company has to offer. In the meantime The White Company Baby line will be incorporated into The White Company brochure which comes out on May 1 and is available free from: The White Company, 238-300 Munster Road, London SW6 6BH. Tel: 0171 353 7985.



Bed sheet, £19.99; pillow case, £9.99; 'bumper', £29.99



Nursery rhyme cushion cover in cotton, £24.99

looking for than anything else, is still the white bed-linen.

There are now some 10 variations on the theme (including absolutely pure cotton pique sheets, hand-embroidered ones, some crocheted-edged, some with hand-drawn threadwork) and a couple of the lines now sport a little, but just a little, colour.

Popular, too, is the service which means that table-cloths can be made up in special sizes and that unusual bedlinen sizes can be made to order.

Whereas in the beginning the company was run from fiancé Nick's attic with the help of her sister, today there is a proper warehouse, a fully integrated mail-order

SHIRTS - At Thomas Pink of Jermyn Street, SW1. Newly arrived: "The Continental", a range of luxury casual shirts in 14 stunning colours. Send for free catalogue, 0171-498 3882.

The Financial Times plans to publish a Survey on

New York State

on Wednesday, April 9

This survey will be the Financial Times first ever on New York and will explore the economic, political, financial, and industrial environment of the state. With city and state political leaders both dedicated to accelerating economic growth, the prospects for the future will also be examined. The state is currently waging a campaign to attract new business with the aim of making New York the Empire State once again.

The survey will also examine the state's other industries including tourism, agriculture, electronic and telecommunications equipment.

If you would like further information, please call:

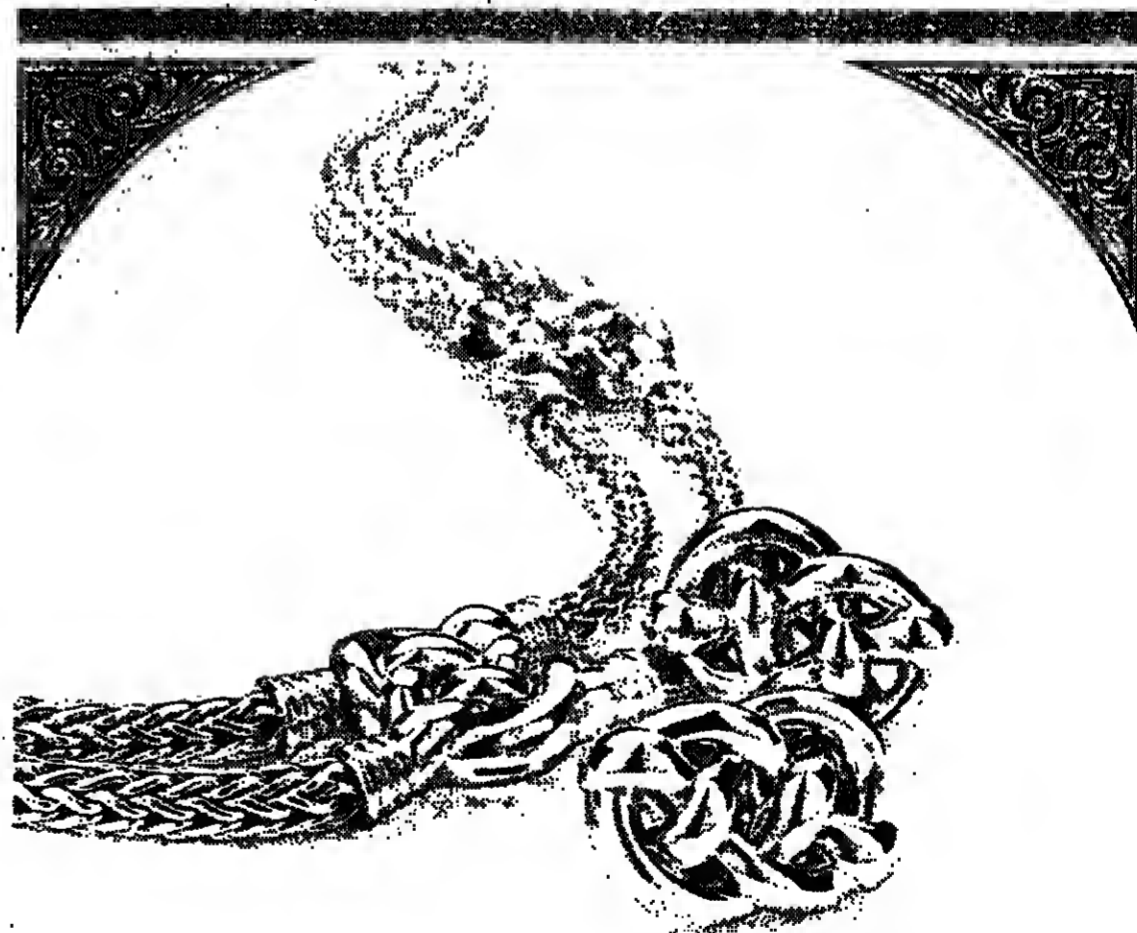
William MacLeod in New York Tel: +1 212 745 1343

or Jenny Middleton in London

Tel: +44 171 873 3794

or your usual Financial Times representative

FT Surveys



Forget-me-knots. Now available in 18 carat gold.



Asprey
LONDON

Part of the Asprey knot collection, these beautiful yellow gold earrings and rope necklaces at £1,150 and £4,725, are knot just for now but forever. Asprey, 165-169 New Bond Street, London. Tel: 0171 495 6767.

OUTDOORS

There's a privy in my back garden

Christine Burton comes face to face with a destructive badger

Halfway down my garden path one beautiful evening last summer, I froze to the spot. There, just a few yards away and quite unobtrusively, was a badger. He - I say he, as at that time I had no way of telling but later events suggested he was indeed a he - was snuffling through a cast-iron fruit tunnel supposedly protecting my strawberries.

The tunnel is about 18in high at the apex and the badger found turning round at the end a bit of a tight squeeze. Still, it was worth it for the remains of my strawberry harvest.

He emerged from the tunnel, sat down, scratched himself - and then saw me. He rushed off and disappeared under my shed

which is built up at one side to take account of uneven ground. I was thrilled to bits; I had never seen a (live) badger in broad daylight before.

Word quickly spread round the village; my neighbours were impressed. "But don't approach him," said one. "They can be vicious." All were agreed that the long spell of dry weather had made the ground so hard that his normal diet of earthworms was unobtainable. The poor creature was obviously starving.

Some time later, in the space of four days, the shed door underwent a transformation. I found I could not shift it. With much heaving, it eventually opened but then it would not shut. The local champion ploughman/drystone waller and fount of all knowledge came on the scene. "I'll have to shave both the floor and the bottom of the door. That's the cure but we must do something about the cause."

Though we could not see anything, the badger's digging had undermined the foundations. "They hate the

smell of creosote," said Roger. We soaked a piece of old sheeting and put it under the front of the shed.

Come the autumn, my uncle came on the phone: "Is that the badger sanctuary?" "Yes," I said wearily, "unfortunately, it still is." The sheet had been dragged further underneath; he was making himself comfortable. A large hole had been dug beside the shed - just where my tulip bulbs are planted.

I consulted one of the local farmers. "He's trying to attract a mate," he said. "He digs a hole, and craps in it. If the lady badger responds by leaving her own deposit, he'll go away. You'll just have to wait."

I waited. The lady appeared not to have been wooed. I put the by-now-frozen offering into a plastic bag and into the dustbin. I filled in the hole.

But my badger is nothing if not persistent. The holes have proliferated - and so have their contents. The latest is inches away from a cyclamen neapolitanum which I had been hoping would naturalise. It has obliterated the cyclamen seeds I had sowed there.

Another is in the middle of the bluebells and anemone blanda which give me such pleasure when they open their blue faces to the early spring sun.

Last winter I found that a tunnel had been dug into the middle of the compost heap. I remembered there had been a wasps' nest there in the summer. The badger had obviously been after the grubs. But I had repaired that damage and it was not repeated. The badger had moved on - by trying to dig under the fence between me

and my next door neighbour. That put paid to the polyanthus.

But this time he was in for the duration. "They're a protected species," said a forester (as if I didn't know). "You can't get rid of him. The only thing you can do is stop him getting in."

Of course, he could come from the field opposite, cross the road and walk up the path, but I think he is scratching over the wall at the bottom of the garden.

This is not difficult since it is the old churchyard wall which collapsed many years ago and about a yew tree

where the soil is banked up round the roots. The slope has been worn smooth with the traffic of clived feet. I have put a coil of barbed wire across the gap. So far, the only damage that has been inflicted is to my face when I was tagging at the wire.

Another hole has appeared - this time about 18in in diameter above a mound of very fine silt. A bank vole, says my neighbour, a weasel, I wonder, since I did have the pleasure of seeing one at that spot in the summer. Now, a couple of daffodil bulbs have erupted half way out of some more freshly exposed silt. A mole?

No longer am I so delighted that my garden is a haven for wildlife.

Hidden treasure washes up in the storm

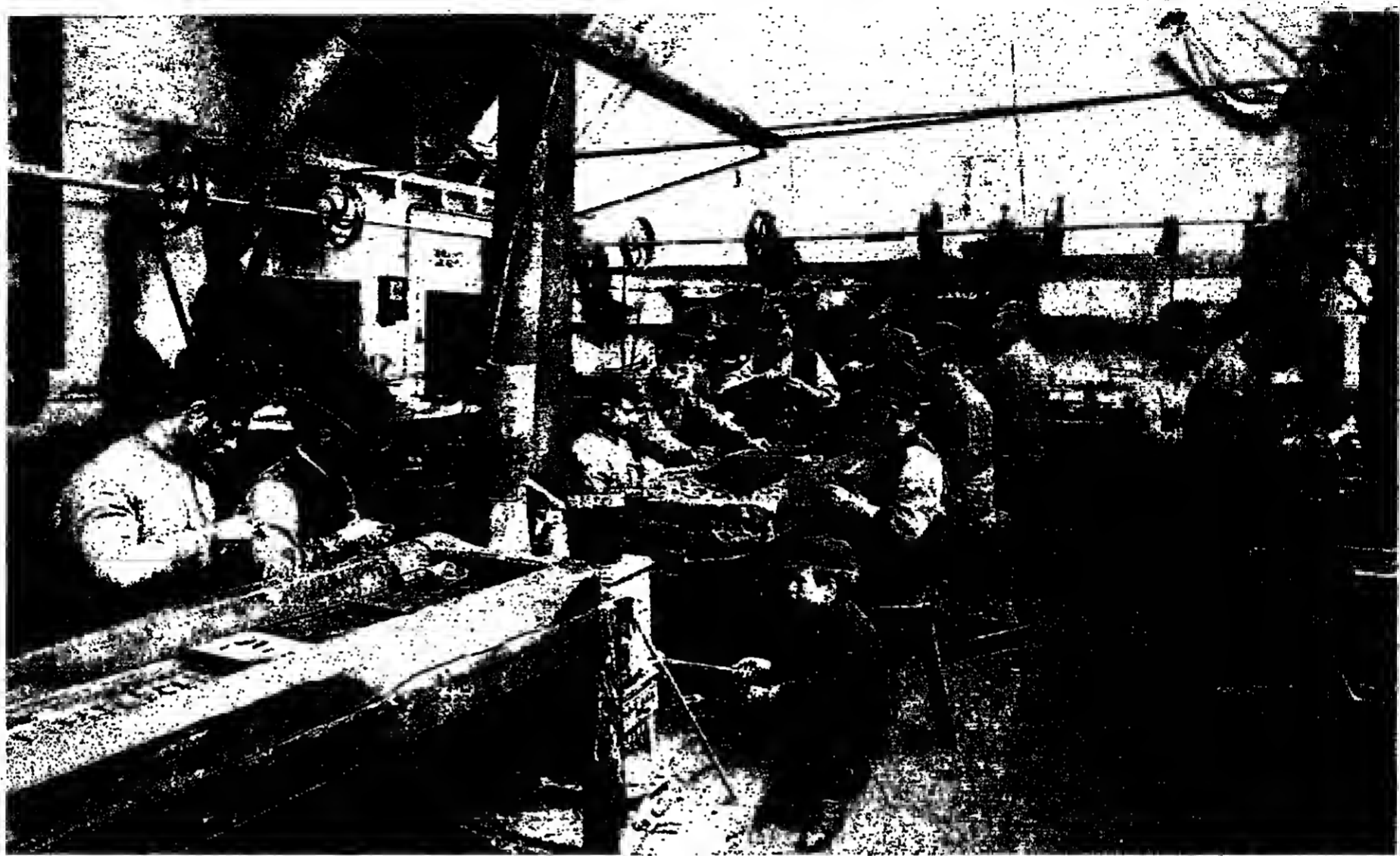
A dark, black stone is making a reappearance in North Yorkshire, writes Nigel Burnham

Stormy weather in Whitby is bad news for the town's struggling guest houses and business is booming. "We are finding it difficult to make enough," says MacKenzie. "Jet is more popular now than at any time since the 1920s - not least, I would say, because black has become the most fashionable colour. The fact is, you can wear jet with anything."

MacKenzie's only gripe - that "working jet is very labour-intensive" - must have been discovered by Bronze Age man 4,500 years ago and later by the Romans and medieval craftsmen.

"It's a fact," says Alec MacKenzie, who runs Victorian Jet Works with his son-in-law Hal Redvers-Jones. "Jet has gone in and out of fashion throughout the ages but its popularity - or lack of it - has often been linked to the availability of the material itself. It's in the cliffs and the rocks on the sea bed and you have to wait for rough seas to sweep it up or expose it."

Whitby's jet - created 180m years ago when monkey puzzle trees were washed into the sea and subsequently fossilised after being flattened under tremendous pressure - is considered the best in the world. And it is still found, by retired fishermen, the unemployed and young children, along an eight-mile stretch of coastline between Sandend and Robin Hood's Bay. Twenty years ago the industry was all but extinct.



A Victorian study: jet workers in Whitby during the heyday of the local industry in 1890

the 1960s, about 30 miles south in the Roman town of Derwent (Malton).

Over the centuries the stone became revered for its supposed magical and medicinal properties. "When heated, jet drives away serpents," wrote the Venerable Bede, while others believed that powdered jet mixed with the marrow of a stag was an antidote for poison, or in the 14th century, hung jet crosses and rosary beads from which posts as charms against witchcraft.

But Whitby's jet's great years came in the 19th century when the ancient primitive methods of fashioning jet using knives, files and rubbing stones were superseded by the ability to turn the stone mechanically.

In 1832, there were only two jet firms, employing 25 hands, but by 1851 there were seven, several of whom were invited to send samples to the Great Exhibition in London. They included Thomas Andrews, jet orna-

ment-maker to Queen Victoria, and Isaac Greenburg, who in 1854 received an order for a 4ft 6in long cable-chain guard from the Queen of Bavaria.

At the height of the Whitby jet rush, between

The stone became revered for its supposed magical and medicinal properties

1870 to 1872, 1,400 men and boys were employed in the industry in Whitby and the surrounding area. Another 200 combed the North York moors for the stone, worked in jet mines in Farndale, Rosedale and the Cleveland Hills or patrolled the sea-

shore looking for washed jet pebbles or cliff falls to reveal a new seam.

Large quantities of jet were exported to France - not just necklaces, pendants, earrings, bracelets, rings and brooches, but also ornaments for hats, bonnets, sprays and clasps in the form of birds, insects and butterflies.

The industry's heyday did not last long. Cheaper, inferior jet imported from Spain and similar jewellery made from vulcanite undermined the Whitby trade while the somewhat bulky pieces went out of fashion as women began to favour more delicate jewellery.

By 1884, the numbers of people employed had dwindled to fewer than 300. In 1921 to 40, while by 1935 it was predicted that "in a few years' time the trade will cease to exist".

The industry's re-birth is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that all the businesses in Whitby are finding it difficult to meet demand.

There are no stockpiles. Everything they have is on display, from jet and silver ear studs at £5.50 a pair to £35 brooches and necklaces costing £100.

Jet is likely to receive another boost in May when half a million people are expected in town during the 10-day visit of the Australian-built replica of Whitby hero Captain Cook's Endeavour.

If they do not buy up all the jet, thousands of people expected to follow to celebrate the centenary of the publication of the Bram Stoker classic *Dracula* - three chapters of which are set in Whitby - probably will.

Whitby may be only a small town with a population of 14,000, but the resurgence of the historic jet trade has given people from all over the world even more reason to visit. "You never see Whitby jet advertised - people get to know about it by word of mouth," says MacKenzie.



Port after a storm: Alec MacKenzie collecting jet

Gardeners have had two unimaginably wonderful weekends. Three in sequence are too much to hope for, but this amazingly kind March has left us well placed for the spring rush. The early bulbs were late in most parts of Britain and we have just enjoyed the unusual sight of crocuses overlapping with the early spring Primroses and the best of the small narcissi.

For several years, I have been dotting small clumps of small narcissi down the lengths of the main flowerbeds. This garden used to be as bleak as the steppes in March, but it is now alive with groups of easy narcissi which other, more favoured areas, would expect to see in February.

I have learned from experience that it is worth any effort and expense to find and plant varieties of daffodil and other bulbs which

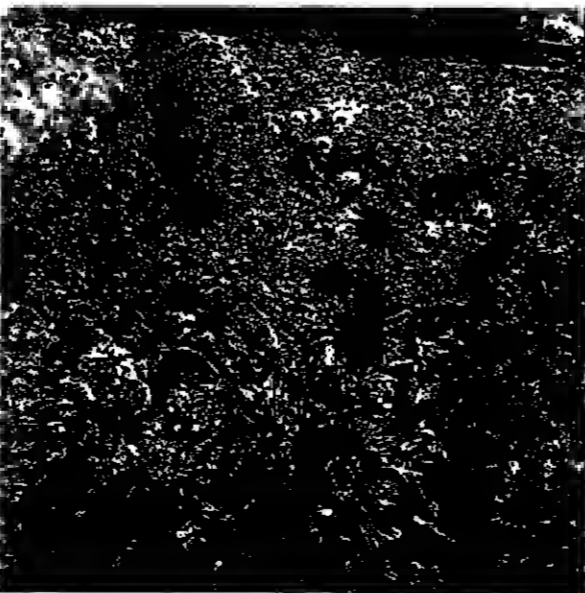


are listed as flowering unusually early. In cold parts of the country, they then appear six weeks late, but still before the rest of the neighbourhood has any-

thing to show for itself.

Among the heavenly flowers of this delayed spring, it is easy to forget to think forward and look beyond the beauty before us. Looking forward is essential if you are to join one of the band-wagons now rolling ever further up a social scale whose supposedly sensitive peaks have been through a period of despatching it. The dahlia has never been despised by most of the members of local gardening clubs and show groups.

When the rest of us went pastel in the mid-1950s and opted simply for covering the ground and saving labour in the 1960s, the dahlia was put firmly back on the allotment from which it was believed to have elevated itself. This strange hiatus in taste is now being repaired. Labour-saving is no longer the arbiter of gardening - it ceases to be fun if it is in no way laborious. Strong colours are back and some of the best borders in the public National Trust gardens have shown that even the grandest settings banish the dahlia at their peril.



Dahlias have emerged from the allotment and are undergoing a renaissance

These days there are short cuts. You can buy this summer's dahlias as ready-rooted cuttings which save any involvement with the bulky, mouldering tuber underneath old plants. Many people are willing to spend a little money to save the extra percentage of time

which now makes the old specialities hard to manage in a weekend garden.

The best dahlia suppliers are taking orders for rooted cuttings and I must emphasise that they are an excellent method, well able to lead on to superb flowers by August. Halls of West Hed-

don, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 0RS, will take orders for rooted cuttings until April 10 and will send by mid-May (tel: 01661-882445).

Halls sends out stock by post, whereas the admirable Aylett will only supply orders for collection. It is at the North Orbital Road, London Colney, St Albans, Herts (tel: 01727-522255). Aylett issues a list and will take orders until April 4, offering a more random stock for cash and carry after April 15 if you have failed to reserve the colours which suit you best. Aylett rooted cuttings are not sent by post.

Last year, I went back to a wider range of dahlias, lured by Halls' postal service. The small rooted cuttings may strain your faith when they arrive in mid to late April, but they will grow into superb flowering plants by mid-August and will transform the range of your garden for the next three months.

Mid-April arrivals must be kept in frost-proof places, preferably a small greenhouse, although I have had success in the spare bed-

room. Each cutting goes into a 5in-pot on arrival and is shaded from sun for a few days and only watered lightly. Soon they start to grow furiously, but they cannot go outdoors until the last week in May in the south of England or early June elsewhere. Halls also sells small pot-grown plants, sent from May 15 onwards, although postage is expensive and confined to the UK. These pot plants are probably the answer for gardeners without greenhouses or Londoners who only want a few of the best.

Dahlia names are wonderfully bouncy, from Jill's Blush to Shandy. In most gardens, the small to medium size of flower is the easiest to combine in borders and match with the other flowers of high summer. The bi-coloured varieties are usually a bit much and one of the giant Cactus varieties will go a very long way indeed.

My great successes last year were lemon yellow Laura's Choice, the tall but small-flowered white Mary Pili, a true shocker called Orange Keith's Choice, the

pale lemon yellow Lemon Elegance which I missed in two large urns and the beautifully formed pink Pearl of Heemstede which proved an excellent cut flower. Dozens of others are tempting and more varieties appear each decade.

Apart from earrings, dahlias come with complications. They must be staked properly, but you will soon learn to make a loop round each plant and attach it to one or two main stakes, set in place when you plant out. Dahlias, like nasturtiums, hate to be too dry when they are young and must be well watered if the UK has a repeat of the 1995, 1996 summers. They flower twice as well if they are properly fertilised with Fish, Blood and Bone when planted and then dressed regularly with liquid fertiliser during the main season.

Drugs bring out a dahlia's intensity and abundance. If you simply plant them out, stake them and forget them, you will miss most of the fun.

Gardeners are good at forward thinking, but mainly in the manner of a daydream. They are less good at acting on their vision of a later season, except in winter when there is nothing much except catalogues and evergreens. Everything has woken up wonderfully this year, but do not let its dawn chorus divert you from the dahlia.

Apply for:
INSIDER GARDENING
A DAY OF LECTURING AND TEACHING
BY ROBIN LANE FOX

JUNE 22 OR JULY 5
At New College, Oxford: 10.15 am to 4.45 pm

LEARN, LAUGH AND OBSERVE

To apply, send your name, address and preferred date (give second and third choices, if possible) and a cheque for £96 (inc. lunch and parking), payable to R and M, 13 Gloucester Street, London S.W.1. Numbers are limited, but tickets and details, or returned cheques, will be sent within 7 working days of receipt.

John MacKenzie

TRAVEL

Spires and Spirits

A thousand merry
voices singing

Adrian Gardiner starts a new, occasional series on Britain's cathedral cities with a visit to Gloucester.

If you suffer from vertigo, don't do this. Along the roof of the nave, through the belfry, and 269 steps towards Heaven, we emerge on top of the tower of Gloucester cathedral.

Far below the historic city is fringed by England's patchwork fields. The silver ribbon of the river Severn snakes its way to the Bristol Channel. Beyond it we can see the Forest of Dean and the mountains of Wales. Well worth the climb.

Henry VIII, better known for vandalising cathedrals than for creating them, came to Gloucester in 1535 and upgraded St Peter's, an 11th-century Norman abbey built

in the perpendicular style. Its walls have witnessed some of history's most turbulent chapters.

Henry III was crowned there, Edward II was buried there, following his incarceration and brutal murder at nearby Berkeley Castle. The nursery rhyme about Dr Foster is said to be based on his father, Edward I. And after the Restoration Charles II, in a fit of revenge, demolished most of the Roman city walls.

The Romans, around AD100, recognised the strategic importance of the site where Gloucester now stands. It commands the lowest crossing point of the Severn. Later Saxons took

control and Aethelfleda, daughter of Alfred the Great, fortified her capital and laid out the street plan still in

out the street plan still in evidence today - a cross of four streets or gates named from the principal compass points. Even without the massive cathedral tower as a reference point, it is hard to get lost in Gloucester.

Gloicester is a compact city: the numerous tourist attractions are all within walking distance. Some thoughtful tourist board executive has put plaques on the important buildings, giving you their history in a nutshell. There are some delightful pubs and restaurants: the Fountain (William of Orange associations) and

The New Inn. It was new in 1455 and offering hospitality to pilgrims visiting Edward II's tomb.

Prosperity arrived in 1827 when the Gloucester and Berkeley canal opened. Like the cathedral, it took 33 years to construct. Great three-masted ships sailed into the city centre with luxuries from the Americas and the Orient. The canal entrepreneurs of the 18th and 19th centuries were probably the most successful investors of all time. Canals were never cheap to build – an average cost of 53,323 per mile for the first 2,000 miles in Britain. By 1830, speculators were receiving an annual average dividend of



Stained glass in Gloucester Cathedral

Best Example / Image

Information

■ Gloucester Cathedral is open every day all year. Guided tours are available but access to the tower is restricted at times: check with the Chapter Office, 17 College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LR (01452-528095).

■ Gloucester Docks:
National Waterways
Museum (01452-318054)
and Museum of
Advertising and Packaging
(01452-302309).

■ Gloucester Tourist Information: The Cross, Gloucester (01452-421186). I stayed in nearby Cheltenham at the charming Hallery House Hotel (01242-578450; fax 529730).

lation. I had to tear myself away to see another equally fascinating part of the docks.

The Robert Opie collection, also known as the Museum of Advertising and Packaging, spans about 70 years. The nostalgia trip includes those Strand cigarettes you were "never alone with"; oval tins of Colman's mustard decorated with the Union Jack; packets of Oxydol and Sunlight soap ("Less Labour, Greater Comfort") might be resurrected one day by Conservative party spin doctors; and a fine collection of wartime propaganda posters: "Careless Talk Costs Lives...Hitler will send no warning, so always carry your gas mask."

Gloucester has numerous film and literary connections. *The Onedin Line* was partly shot in the docks and Joanna Trollope's *The Choir* in the cathedral. W E Hangle, inspiration for Stevenson's character Long John Silver, lived on Eastgate. On Westgate was the shop of the tailor immortalised by Beatrix Potter in *The Tailor of Gloucester*: "From all the roofs and gables and old wooden houses in Gloucester came a thousand merry voices singing."

they acquired a new role. Half-a-dozen museums and heritage centres now occupy the warehouses.

The National Waterways Museum has the complete history of canals and the navvies who built them. The exhibition extends beyond Llantony warehouse into the adjoining dock. It is all very hands-on and, eventually, having built a few miles of canal on a computer simu-

MARBELLA
Spain
HOTEL LOS MONTEROS
"Escape to Golfers' Paradise"
From £56 (11,800 Ptas.) +7% VAT
per person in double room
Includes champagne buffet breakfast
Private Beach Club * 4 Swimming Pools *
3 Gourmet Restaurants * 4 Bars * Live Music *
10 Tennis Courts * 5 Squash Courts *
ENJOY FREE GOLF at our 18-hole
championship course RÍO REAL, considered
one of the four best courses in Marbella.
Tel: (34-5) 282 38 46 * Fax: (34-5) 282 58 46
E-mail: monteros@ctv.es

DRAYCOTT HOUSE
10 Draycott Avenue, Chelsea, London SW3 3AA
Telephone: 0171 584 4659 Fax: 0171 225 3694

Luxury, serviced apartments housed in an attractive period building, combining comfort, privacy and all aspects of personal security. Located in a quiet avenue in Chelsea, 5 minutes walk from Knightsbridge, convenient to the West End and The City. Ideal for business or leisure visit, a personal service offers a great alternative to a luxury hotel. Spacious 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments from £940 to £2184 + VAT per week or from £148-£343 + vat per night. For further information and reservations contact Jane Renison - General Manager.

HOTEL GARDENS


... As in Romantic Escape

190 year old gardens by the sea, warm, luxurious & elegant.
A peaceful wilderness surrounded by beauty - and so, so quiet.
Just the cure! Pets welcome.

CASHEN HOUSE HOTEL

CORRIEMARA, CO. GALWAY

Tel: 00-353-95-31601
Fax: 00-353-95-31077



Plas Hauld

Enjoy pure tranquility and outstanding cuisine in this Historic Derbyshire Country House, recently nominated as "One of The Most Romantic Hotels in Britain" and recommended by all major guides. 2 day breaks available. M1 Exit 28 20 minutes.
Telephone Maccles (01625) 582795

**INEXPENSIVE ACCOMMODATION
IN LONDON SW1**

 **ELIZABETH HOTEL
& APARTMENTS**

**37 ECCLESTON SQUARE,
VICTORIA, LONDON, SW1V 1PB**

Friendly, private hotel in ideal, quiet location overlooking magnificent gardens of stately residential square, on fringe of Belgrave.

Comfortable Singles from £40.00,
Doubles/Triples from £62.00 and
Family Rooms from £79.00
prices including good
ENGLISH BREAKFAST & VAT.

Also luxury 2 bedrooms & studio
apartments (min. let 3 months)

*For further information & brochure
Tel 011 878 6812*

Egon Ramsay & Co. Incorporated

The Clifton Hotel
FOLKSTONE'S PREMIER HOTEL



AA **Triple** **BAC**
Bespoke Privacy. Style. Cliff top hotel.
50 bedrooms on-site, satellite TV,
welcome bar, telephone. Solarium.

GIFTING WEEKEND
BREAKS
- Breakfast £25 pp - 2 nts DBAS
- 5 nts or the DBAS (must include
- Christmas) £120pp inc VAT -

ANYTIME BREAKS
- 4 nights DBAS from £104 pp -

CLIFF LEISURE BREAKS
7 nights or more
DBS 245 Daily

01303
851231



Situated on the banks of the River Wyre, Llangoed Hall has been lovingly refurbished by Sir Bernard Ashley, the widower of Laura Ashley.

This is a true country house hotel, no reception desk, no-one demanding a postage credit card, just friendly staff to take your bags and coats.

The Dining Room has Michelin Star cuisine and is regarded as one of the finest in the U.K.

LLANGOED HALL
 Llysfaen, Brecon, Powys, LD3 0YP
 Tel: 01874 754525 Fax: 01874 754545
 email: 101543.2311@compuserve.com

Lythe Hill Hotel and Auberge de France Restaurant

Lythe House is in the heart of the Surrey & Sussex Countryside in the heart South of London

Our fully inclusive Hotel programme from two nights on Great Value and after breakfast on British Milderly Monday to last £119.00 per person (inclusive of room hire, breakfast, taxes and service) is available at the following rates:

Single Room: £119.00
Double Room: £139.00
Triple Room: £159.00
Quadruple Room: £179.00

For more information, please contact us at 0181 871 1111 or write to Lythe Hill Hotel, 100 Lythe Hill, Lythe, Surrey, GU24 0JH.

PLEASE CALL FOR MORE DETAILS AND OUR FULL COLOUR BROCHURE

the
Essential
Hotel *guide*

The FT Essential Hotel Guide appears on the last Saturday of every month within the travel section of the FT. For details of advertising in the next Guide or for information on our forthcoming travel features please contact:

Will Piper
Travel and Leisure
Financial Times
Number One Southwark Bridge,
London SE1 9HL

Direct Line: 0171 873 4418
Fax: 0171 873 3098

THE WEEKEND
LONDON'S LATEST LIBRARY
TOWN HOUSE HOTEL

THREE
LEONARD

*Equine fabrics, Sumptuous
Silks, Fluffy Towels, Great
Beds, Overstuffed Pillows,
Huge Bathrobes, and
Outstanding People who
want to look after You. Enjoy
London from the Luxury of
our fabulous Suite,
Shop, Theatre, Museums,
Room and Relax.*

Prices From £82.00 per
person per night sharing for a
2 night stay at the weekend.

Tel. 0171 935 2010
Fax 0171 935 6100

Executive Hotel Reservations

Up to **50% off**
4 & 5 STAR HOTELS

from **£45.00**
pp/pt sharing a twin.

ALL WORLDWIDE
0171-935 1335
Fax 0171 935 9363

the _____
Essential
Hotel *guide*

The Blakeney Hotel
AA***BAC ETS***
Blakeney, N.Y. Hotel, Norfolk Neck 75NE
Traditional, privately owned friendly hotel
overlooking National Trust Harbor.
60 bedrooms all en-suite with
color TV & phone, Vandyke Indoor Pool,
spa, tennis, outdoor & mini-golf. Comfortable
lounge, cocktail bar & gardens. Lift.
Visit to wine, milk, wolf, birdwatching,
play golf & visit historic places like
Sandskingsham, the Norfolk Village,
countryside & coast.
Midweek & Weekend Rates
4 & 7 Day Holidays
tel: 01263 740779
fax: 01263 740795

Bath in Spring
Romance & Nostalgia
from an Age Past
Imagine slipping champagne in an old fashioned, red-topper bathtub, surrounded by your favorite blasting fire, then retiring to your antique four poster. Dine by candle & flickering fire light in your own room, or in our charming English style restaurant. Relax and unwind in our charming 18thC farmhouse hotel set in tranquil beauty spot On Bath, 1 1/2 miles A44. Indoor heated pool opening onto sun terrace. Spa & solarium are great for relaxing. 9 beds, 9 beds & pool pool & croquet.
Special fireide breaks
Book now for Easter
HINTON GRANGE
01179 372 916
info@hinton-grange.co.uk

THE HALKIN

**Discover a
secret
haven in
the heart of
Belgravia**

**For information on
our Special
Weekend and
Winter rates,
please contact:**

**The Halkin
Halkin Street,
Belgravia, London
SW1X 7DJ**


**Tel: 0171-333 1000
Fax: 0171-3331100**

**4* Easter
Weekend Break**

3 nights for the price of **2**
now only **\$55** ppn
Between Fri 28th & Mon 5th March
1997 (monthly £62.50ppn, Min 5 nights any
time)

• Full English Breakfast
• Dinner • Dessert • Drink
• Entertainment & Private

Sample excellent cuisine, relax in
luxury 4* hotel surroundings inc
Pool, Spa, Croquet, Giant Chess,
Tennis & Fitness Trail



DOWN HALL
Country House Hotel

Just 55 miles from London
Heartland Hotel, Barbours, Southport,
Hills, CH22 7AA

01279 731441

[illegible]

HIGHBULLEN
Country House Hotel, Chittlehamholt

- North Devon ● Secured yet marvellous view ● highly rated restaurant
- 40 en-suite rooms ● all the important hotel guides ● 4 Crows Highly Commended ● rates from £52.50 to £80.00 p.pn, including dinner, breakfast, service and VAT. ● Seasonal Brakes available.

**UNLIMITED FREE GOLF ON OUR 18 HOLES COURSE (PAR 67)
11 MILES OF SALMON AND SEA TROUT FISHING**

Indoor & outdoor heated pool, outdoor & INDOOR tennis, squash, croquet, billiards, sauna, steam room, sunbed, spa bath, indoor putting, massage.

Executive conferences max 20. Children over 8.

85 acre semi-untamed woodland. Telephone 01769 540561



COUNTRY HOUSE & BATH

Take a beautiful Georgian country house—honed, overcooked,
a famous valley. Add a country club with 82 acres of greenside spice
with tennis, golf, heated swimming pools outside and in, an exercise
studio, hydrojets and beauty clinic. Guarnish with a choice of house
cuisine or leisure fire, and place in Bath. Serve all ages and tastes.

Full details and activities programmes.
Reservations

COMBE GORSE MANOR

(BATH AND COUNTRY CLUB)

call now and enjoy exceptionally reduced rates

Mookham Combe, Bath, Hampshire. (01228) 824044 Fax: 824041.

EASTER
in the
COTSWOLDS

16th century Elizabethan Manor House set in beautiful gardens with log fires and a restaurant renowned for its excellence.

Special Short Breaks offered at Easter and throughout April. For details contact:

The Greenway
Shurdington, Cheltenham, Glos GL51 5UG
Tel: 01242 562352. Fax: 01242 562780

the **Essential** **Hotel** *guide*

BROCHURE ORDER FORM

Please tick the appropriate box(es) for the hotel brochure(s) you would like to receive. (Maximum 10) Enter your own name and address and return by post or fax (address below). Replies must be received no later than April 1997.

<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel Los Monteros	<input type="checkbox"/> The Blakeney
<input type="checkbox"/> Draycott House	<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Hotel Reservations
<input type="checkbox"/> Cashel House Hotel	<input type="checkbox"/> Hinton Grange
<input type="checkbox"/> Ribet Hall	<input type="checkbox"/> The Halkin
<input type="checkbox"/> The Clifton	<input type="checkbox"/> Down Hall
<input type="checkbox"/> Lythe Hill	<input type="checkbox"/> Isles of Scilly
<input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Hotel & Apartments	<input type="checkbox"/> Highbullen
<input type="checkbox"/> Llangoed Hall	<input type="checkbox"/> Coombe Grove Manor
<input type="checkbox"/> The Leonard	<input type="checkbox"/> The Greenway

Title: Initial: Surname:
Address:
Postcode:
Daytime telephone: Facsimile:

Please return to
WEEKEND FT ESSENTIAL HOTELS BROCHURE SERVICE
(Ref (03/97) Upcott Avenue
Barnstaple, EX31 1HN

The information you provide will be held by the Financial Times and may be used to keep you informed of FT products and by other selected companies for mailing list purposes. The FT is registered under the Data Protection Act 1984. Financial Times, Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL. Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive any further information from the FT Group or companies approved by the FT Group Ltd.

FOOD AND DRINK

A secret that the Swiss want to share

Growers are keen to export their wines, says Jancis Robinson

Daniel Schwarzenbach is a young New Zealand wine-maker. Although he was born in Switzerland, his family emigrated to New Zealand when he was nine and his taste in wine has been formed by that country's bold, almost strident, wine styles, some of the most obviously acid in the world.

His most recent assignment has been to cross hemispheres. Last year he was working at the excellent Fromm winery in New Zealand's South Island. This year he is working at the owner Georg Fromm's original base, the Fromm family wine estate at Malans in eastern Switzerland.

Pity, therefore, the taste buds of this trained oenologist. His palate must be in turmoil. It would be difficult to imagine two less similar styles than the typical Swiss and the typical New Zealand wine.

Oak, a beloved prop in New Zealand wineries, is virtually taboo in Switzerland. And whereas New Zealanders treasure crisp, fruity acidity, even in red wines, Swiss wine drinkers abhor acid. They like their wines to be mellow, soft, gentle.

Swiss winemakers routinely follow the alcoholic fermentation with a second, softening process called mal-

Where to buy it

■ Fromm's La Strada Pinot Noir Reserve 1994, made in New Zealand, was outstanding and in now unobtainable, although Lay & Wheeler in Colchester lists some of the regular bottlings.

■ Swiss wines are imported by Harrison Vintners of London EC1 and by Settridges, Limited, quantities of Rouvinez's fine wines are available from Tony Goodall on 01454-529400.

■ Further inquiries to Swiss Wine Exporters' Association in Lausanne fax (41) 21 312 7482.

olactic fermentation which converts harsh malic acid into soft lactic acid.

This leaves Swiss wines with some of the lowest acidities in Europe. In fact, in the 1980s a German importer returned a large consignment of Swiss wine because it was so low in acid.

I pondered all this on a recent visit to Switzerland to meet some members of the newly active Swiss Wine Exporters' Association. Wine exports will never make a big contribution to Switzerland's balance of payments, but Swiss wine growers, who have to a large extent been subsidised at the expense of property developers in a laudable effort to keep the

land of milk and money beautiful, are suddenly having to look for foreign markets.

For years they were protected by stiff tariffs and quotas on imported wines, but now that Switzerland is becoming less isolationist, these are steadily disappearing - with predictable results on the home market.

The Swiss - who drink more wine per head than anyone other than the French, Italians, Portuguese and Luxembourgers - are used to importing far more red wine than they could possibly produce, but quotas on imported white wine were removed in 1995 and last year imports of foreign

white wines more than doubled. The Swiss, it would seem, are delighted that they are at last able to get their hands on reasonably affordable non-Swiss whites.

As might be expected of such a carefully protected market, the supply and demand are way out of balance. The Swiss want to drink more than twice as much red wine as white, but in fact produce much more white wine than red.

The wines they can sell most easily domestically are reds and their most interesting are whites, so the wines they want to export are their more ordinary whites. Yet

the world's wine importers are turning decisively towards reds from whites, and especially away from relatively low-acid, subtle whites with no oak ageing.

Then there is the question of price. Land and labour costs in the Swiss wine industry are among the world's highest. The scale is so small that yields are measured not, as elsewhere in Europe, in terms of hectolitres of must per hectare of vineyard, but in kilos of grapes per square metre.

One has only to look at the terraces carved out of the mountainsides of Vaud and Valais, the two main wine producing cantons, to see why Swiss wine will never

be cheap. Chasselas, the grape planted on 40 per cent of all Swiss vineyard, is what the Swiss Wine Exporters' Association would most like to ship out of the country. At its most basic it is unexciting stuff. At its best it demands the sort of attention which, alas, few modern wine drinkers are prepared to invest in an unadorned dry white wine.

When grown with the utmost care in perfect spots along the northern shore of Lake Geneva and on the higher terraces of the upper Rhône valley (where it is called *Pendant*), it can produce wines of great delicacy and even ageing potential - as Rouvinez's *Pendant de*

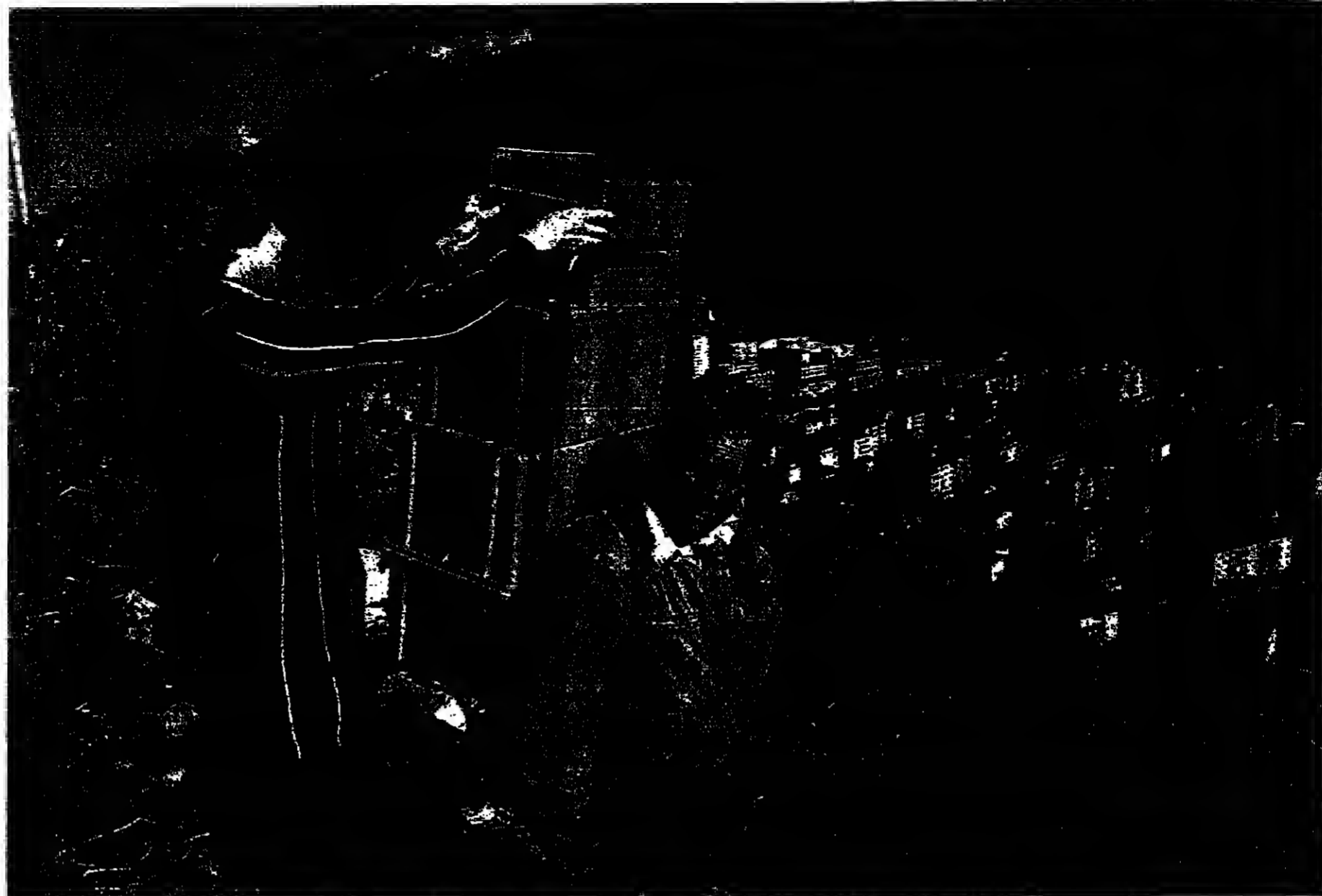
Sierre 1995 and Bovard's 1990 *Dézaley Médinetta* proved. But such wines are likely to sell for a sum much closer to £15 a bottle than £5, which will naturally limit demand.

More immediately appealing to non-Swiss palates are the exotic flavours of the Valais' wine specialities, especially the rich and broad *Amigne* and the versatile *Petite Arvine* - and *Humagne Rouge* and *Cornalin*, except that they are red and, therefore, like the best of Ticio's *Merlot* and *Valais* Syrah, find a ready market in Switzerland itself.

The would-be Swiss wine exporters I met were without exception charming individuals, perhaps precisely because they are still innocents abroad. "Do you write only about Swiss wine?" one of them asked me.

The UK office of the SWEA is offering several to operatively priced introductory mixed cases, of which the two at £48.80 for six assorted bottles look the best value to me. Details on 0171-987 6117.

For the moment, however, the chief beneficiaries of the Swiss desire to export wine are likely to be the organisers of major international wine exhibitions, where over the next year or so the SWEA will be making sure that its eager presence is felt.



Bringing home the vintage above Martigny: Swiss wine growers are suddenly having to look for foreign markets

A knack for the right culinary fashion track

Nicholas Lander meets a top US restaurateur

London's reputation as an international restaurant destination has been underlined recently by the number of chefs flying in and out of the capital.

On the day American restaurateur Drew Nieporent arrived to supervise the opening of Nobu, his new restaurant in The Metropolitan Hotel, Hyde Park, Alain Ducasse, after cooking at Monte's, in Chelsea, where he is consulting chef, returned to his Michelin-starred restaurants in Paris and Monaco.

Nieporent is increasing the restaurants in his Myriad Restaurant Group to 11. They include Rubicon in San Francisco and several of Manhattan's most successful restaurants - Montrachet, the Tribeca Grill and Nobu. Nieporent has just returned from Bali where he has been talking to Hyatt about improvements to its hotel restaurants. All this is a considerable achievement given that his first restaurant, Montrachet, only opened in 1985 when he was aged 29.

In spite of his success, Nieporent has managed to retain a sense of perspective not normally associated with Manhattan or today's frenetic restaurant industry. Over lunch he spoke enthusiastically about his next project, restaurant in Minton's Playhouse, Harlem, which will be partly financed by musician Quincy Jones and film director Spike Lee.

Nieporent possesses a sensitive palate for emerging culinary flavours and fashions. In New York, Montrachet answered the call for top French cooking using American ingredients: Tribeca Grill confidently proclaimed state-of-the-art American cooking while, more recently, Layla brought modern Middle Eastern cooking to the fore. The neglected food of Spain, he feels, may be the subject

of another future venture. Only Nobu's modern Japanese cooking is replicated within the group. For those fortunate enough to book a table for dinner - it will open for lunch in London at the end of next month - the Omakase menu, which translates as "let the chef loose", offers seven stunning courses for £50. Monkfish liver pâté with sweet miso sauce and caviar; thin slices of turbot with a hot sauce of olive and sesame oils and the blue-fin tuna *sashimi* were exceptional.

Each restaurant is separately financed from different investors, often as many as 24

Nieporent's professional grounding was in the hard school of table waiting in Manhattan. He rose to become restaurant manager at Maxwell's Plum and then at Tavern on the Green, two of the city's busiest establishments. "When I was learning my trade," he explained, "I realised that nobody really took an interest in me. What I have tried to do since then is collect young, smart people and say to them if you want what I have - take it."

"Think and do like I do just do not look like I do," he added, alluding to the weight he has put on. "The company has sales of more than \$30m and a staff of several hundred and is based on building up a core management, promoting from within and then taking people off to open a new restaurant. To open Nobu in London, I have brought over Nobu Matsuhisa, the head

chef, the top *sushi* chef, the hot food chef and our food purchaser."

To this philosophy Nieporent has added a distinctive opening strategy. "Whenever we open it is always the same. First you open for dinner six days a week and get the service right. Then you open for dinner on the seventh day and then, and only then, do you open for lunch. This way we can train the initial staff - dinner is usually more relaxed than lunch - and they can train the new staff."

Each restaurant is separately financed from different investors, often as many as 24, and Nieporent's close association with Robert de Niro, the actor, since they opened the Tribeca Grill in 1980, has been an added attraction.

Nieporent explained his basic financial criteria. He aims for a food cost of between 28 per cent and 32 per cent of total running costs, a staff cost of no more than 40 per cent and an overall net profit of 10 per cent. London's restaurateurs aim for the same profit level but pay higher food costs and lower wage costs. "An expensive rent is crucial but so, too, is turning the tables and, most importantly, doing this politely. At Nobu we set limits of two or 2½ hours for dinner bookings."

Nieporent has formed definite ideas on how the east and west coasts of the US differ in their eating habits. "In New York, it is where you sit, in San Francisco it is what you eat. The customers are easier in San Francisco because the city is not overrun with celebrities and they will happily go up to Rubicon's second floor. But I could never get New Yorkers off the ground floor. They pull a face when you tell them their reservation is in the back room at Nobu and only cheer up when they see Liza Minnelli or Mel Gibson sitting there."

He added: "San Francisco



Drew Nieporent: had a professional grounding in the hard school of table waiting

has particular difficulties. The labour pool is much smaller so the hourly rates are higher, yet menu prices have to be lower because Californians are used to inexpensive food. I am not yet sure what London's peculiarities are but I fear it is a shortage of trained staff."

Having reached this size, Myriad is facing problems which may mean the installation of a stronger corporate structure. For the first

time one restaurant, Zepole, is underperforming.

"It is not the food," Nieporent explained. "The New York Times review was very complimentary but unfortunately described it as 'old-fashioned Italian' so it is missing out on the young, fashion-conscious market. I am hoping that press coverage of the party Martin Scorsese held for his mother's cookbook will change that."

Nieporent says: "Running restaurants is a serious business although not as profitable as people think - it is a bit like winning the lottery and not collecting the cash. But it is only a meal and there is always tomorrow to rectify what you did not do right today."

To make the point, before opening Nobu in London, Nieporent held two cocktail parties for 100 London restaurateurs - an unparalleled gesture from a singular, trans-Atlantic restaurateur.

Appetisers

Book prize withheld

The 1996 André Simon award for wine book of the year was to be announced earlier this month but, unhappily, this year's crop of wine books did not yield anything worthy of the main award.

In an impassioned speech to an audience including many publishers and journalists, assessor Jasper Morris, a Master of Wine, urged broader coverage of the wine industry.

The shortlisted wine books were Jim Budd's *Appreciating Fine Wines* (Apple Press, £14.99, 160 pages), Rosemary George's *The Wines of New Zealand* (Faber, £20, 330 pages) and Jancis Robinson's pocket *Guide to Wine Grapes* (Oxford University Press, £9.99, 240 pages).

The André Simon committee is looking forward to a better vintage next year.

Food book of the year fared better and the prize was shared between *Traditional Spanish Cooking* by Janet Mandel (Garnet Publishing, £14.95, 250 pages) and *The Melting Pot - Balkan Food and Cookery* by Maria Kaneva-Johnson (Prospect Books, £19.50, 384 pages), from which Philip Davenport gives a recipe on the opposite page.

The True History of Chocolate (Thames & Hudson, £16.95, 280 pages) received a special commendation.

Jill James

■ Lay & Wheeler of Colchester (01206-764446) has reduced prices on some red Bordeaux and Languedoc wines. Chateau Borise-Azau 1994 is an aromatic, racy red Corbières, absolutely typical of the higher vineyards of this southern appellation. At £5.60 a bottle, it can already be drunk with great pleasure

whereas another Corbières at the same price, Chais Suzanne 1995, is ambitious enough to be kept until Christmas. It is worth stocking up on southern French 1995 reds as 1996 was a much more difficult vintage. Jancis Robinson

■ If I could have just one chocolate treat for Easter I guess it would be one of Ackerman's eggs (from £12.95). Or maybe the Picasso Truffles (£16.95 for 375g). Or the Champagne truffles (£16.95, 454g). Or the chocolate ricciarelli (£8.95) Or...oh, well, you choose something from



The Chocolate Club, Unit 3, St Pancras Commercial Centre, 63 Pratt Street, London NW1 0BY. Tel: 0171-287 5375, fax 5357.

■ Other chocolate lovers find satisfaction at Rocco, London SW5 (0171-362 5857), where more than 20 chocolate animals are on sale as well as boxed eggs with truffles. You could also try The Chocolate Society's Shop, at 36 Elizabeth Street, SW1 (0171-259 9222). One of the most expensive creations on sale in London this Easter is the 41in tall chocolate fantasy house that sits proudly in the window of Patisserie Valerie, in Regent Street, which tool pâtissier Igor Bekasert 15 hours to make. He is a reluctant seller even at the asking price of £850. Nicholas Lander

Dub
Giles MacDonogh

CLARKE
FARM VINTNERS

MOTORING

Buying a Rolls-Royce

The sensible way to own a piece of British history

Steve Cropley finds that second-hand models have a great deal to offer

Every week, about 20 Rolls-Royce and Bentley saloons change hands in the UK. About a third of them are new, driven gleaming from the plush showrooms of Britain's 35 Rolls-Royce dealerships by new owners with pots of disposable cash and a deep desire to own the Best Cars in the World.

The remaining two-thirds are second-hand. They are highly polished, too, but the bigger gleam is likely to be in the eye of their canny buyers. This is because, in the past couple of years, Rolls-Royce and Bentley saloons of a certain age have become surprisingly sensible, practical buys, even against top-end executive cars from Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, BMW and Lexus.

It was not always so. The company, based in Crewe, Cheshire, hit dangerous waters

30 years ago and has taken its time to recover. The trouble began when it launched its first truly postwar car, the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow, in 1965. Demand soared and production responded. It soon became apparent, however, that the buyers had changed character.

Traditionalists, of the type inclined to buy a new Rolls every August, were giving way to millionaire pop music stars and footballers with an instinct for "lowering the tone". The old exclusiveness of the marque was tarnished and prices for used cars tumbled as the market struggled to absorb all the "seven-day wonder" Shadows sold by the new breed of owners.

Since then, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has had to survive near-bankruptcy. There were two Arab oil embargoes in the 1970s and two recessions in the 1980s, both of which had a

drastic effect on sales. Profitability plunged and the situation became serious enough for the company's parent, Vickers, to contemplate selling out to Mercedes or Toyota.

Today, though, Rolls-Royce glows with health. One of the main factors in this recovery is the crucial technical link with BMW which will, in two years' time, help it to launch the first all-new Rolls saloon since Silver Shadow. There has been major re-organisation of factory and workforce. But what counts most to customers is a series of improvements to the cars themselves, which had seemed to be sliding into senility.

Handling, reliability and equipment have been improved. The Bentley has been re-established decisively as the performance option of the pair. And the reputation of the Rolls-Royce for classical luxury

has been rebuilt. The upshot is that a Rolls-Royce or Bentley of five to eight years old is as reliable, as imposing, as slow to depreciate and as well backed by a warranty as the best of its rivals. And more and more owners are recognising it.

Nigel Winchester, managing director of his family's furniture business in the Cotswolds, west of London, has been buying second-hand Rolls-Royces since the beginning of the 1980s. Now in his late 50s, he insists he would not contemplate a change.

"I'm on my sixth used Rolls," he says. "I used to buy BMWs and Mercedes, but there's something special about the way you sit up in a Rolls. The way it coaxes you makes the German cars seem very austere by comparison."

"Plenty of my business rivals pay much more for their top-end German cars than I do - because



How a Rolls-Royce holds value: this 1976 Camargue was estimated at £28,000-£33,000 in a recent London auction

they buy them new - and I don't believe they save anything on running costs."

According to used vehicle values published in the car trade guide, *The Book*, the prize Rolls-Royce or Bentley is three to five years old, new enough to have benefited from the recent performance and durability changes, but old enough to be valued well below its new price.

A 1992 K-registration Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit, with 40,000 miles on the clock and which cost a shade under

£100,000 new, would cost around £45,000 now from an accredited Rolls dealer. *The Book's* experts estimate that an owner who kept the car five years, then disposed of it in a private sale, should realise around £25,000.

That would mean his five years of luxury motoring had cost £20,000 - or about the same that the owner of a new Rolls-Royce or Mercedes S800 must budget to lose in depreciation in his first year of ownership.

Many outsiders claim you have

to be a snob to buy a Rolls-Royce, but Winchester denies that. "If you own a snob," he says, "selling your Rolls won't save you. If you're not a snob, people will know it."

"I find most people are interested in my car, not resentful of it. As a matter of fact, I really enjoy the non-aggressive nature of the Rolls, which means you're not inclined to compete with other traffic. My Silver Spirit gets me where I want to go, and fast. But it never races anyone."

Six years on from the great international classic and collectors' car market crash of 1990-91, the wheels have at last been put back on, the bodywork has been straightened and the road to recovery is being taken at an increasing clip.

The occasional bit of wreckage can still be seen: a liquidator approaching an auction house with a long-concealed Ferrari; or the occasional E-Type Jaguar, over-hyped in the late 1980s' boom and sold reluctantly by a cash-strapped owner resigned, at last, to receiving much less than before the market veered off the road.

But the XK140 Jaguars - and many other similarly priced classics - which were changing hands for as little as \$35,000 (£22,000) immediately after the crash are back up to \$85,000-£75,000, while some less exalted sports cars like the Austin-Healey 3000 are now fetching almost double the \$18,000-£20,000 level of the crash.

Higher up the market, even auction house principal Robert Brooks could hardly believe his ears at a sale in Geneva earlier this month when Oscar-winning US actor Nicolas Cage bid \$77,729,500 (nearly \$60,000) for the late Shah of Iran's Lamborghini Miura SVJ - more than twice Brooks' estimate.

All this means that, on most classic and collectors' cars, the price tags are pointing up. But can memories of the crash be so short that the market for these vehicles is heading once again for a speculative boom?

"The investment angle is justifiable - but only as the excuse you give to your wife for buying a car you want to drive and enjoy owning," says Brooks, a former Christie's classic car auctioneer.

His own auction house, set up in 1989, is now the biggest international clearing house for the sector. And he is the man who was wielding the gavel when the record price for any car was set: \$8.8m for a Bugatti Royale in 1987.

There is no doubt that the market has regained buoyancy in the UK and is gathering fresh momentum in continental Europe, North America and south-east Asian markets such as Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia.

This upsurge is reflected both in the proliferation of auctions and the re-entry to the market of wealthy Japanese and others in the booming Asia-Pacific region, buying privately through a well-developed international grapevine.

In the past few years, the total number of sales devoted to the classic and collector car market in the UK - which is, like motor sport, the world hub of the business - has averaged a dozen, spread mainly between the Brooks, Christie's, Sotheby's and Coys houses. This year, at least 40 are scheduled.

Continental Europe, a laggard in the classic car business - only one auction



History in the making... Jean Bugatti and father Ettore with the firm's legendary Royale. One was auctioned for a record \$8.8m in 1987

Classic and Collectors' Cars

Buyers return as the bruises fade

John Griffiths spots signs of recovery from the great prices crash

house, the Paris-based Poulain, has a dedicated cars section - is the focus of increased activity. A couple of years ago, barely half a dozen auctions were staged. This year, 14 are scheduled, with Brooks alone holding six.

The sale at Monaco in the first weekend of May will be one of the biggest of recent years and will form part of the principality's 70th anniversary celebrations. The price that could be fetched by one of its star attractions, Ferrari's late-1950s' 250GT "Tour de France" racer, already is the subject of much speculation.

Indeed, Europe's untapped market potential is regarded as so large that Brooks has set up a subsidiary in Geneva. Brooks Europe, to exploit it. The new business is headed by managing director Simon Kudston who is a nephew of Glen Kudston, one of motor racing's legend-

ary "Bentley Boys" of the 1920s. He used to be with Coys and organised that company's own major continental auction, held at Germany's Nurburgring.

Another indicator of reviving interest across the world is the deal (via private treaty) by which Japanese entrepreneur Yoshiyuki Hayashi re-purchased several of the 1930s' Alfa Romeo P3 grand prix racing cars he owned until the early 1980s. He is said to have paid more than \$1m each.

Brooks points out, however, that prices in most cases remain well below the lofty heights of the late 1980s. And he believes that increases are likely to be progressive, not explosive. "The activity is back - sales volumes are almost the same as in 1989-90 - but in most cases not the prices," he says.

"Yes, there is upward movement, and that is good

for the market and good for us. But I haven't changed my mind that, this time round, there will be no bubble."

"People do have shortish memories when times come good again. But the falls we witnessed in the crash, for a market that basically has been in existence only since the 1970s, were so dramatic that they will not easily be forgotten."

The crash saw one D-Type Jaguar racing car, which fetched £1.2m in October 1989, re-sold in 1993 for £400,000. Today, its value has recovered, but only to an estimated £500,000.

"Ordinary" Ferraris, with no special history, fell from £200,000-£220,000 to as low as \$35,000-£40,000 and, according to the auction houses, have recovered to only around £50,000.

But cars such as the

shah's Lamborghini show that high prices can be made where the vehicle concerned has special qualities such as a colourful history, rarity value or originality.

In most cases, though, and viewed from the 1989 market peak, the lesson is clear: "investment" now is just about the last word to describe buying into the collectors' car market, even for those purchasing in its trough. But that, says Brooks, is really how it should be.

He notes that while the market might be big - worth an estimated \$55m, with 7,000 cars auctioned each year in the UK alone - it is not suited to speculators.

"Apart from anything else," he adds, "there is a cost to owning and maintaining such cars which can itself be very expensive. They are not like share certificates which you just lock away in a safe."

Road Test

Put this Galant high on your list

For comfort and reliability, you will go a long way to find a better car, writes Stuart Marshall

If you want comfort, reliability and prestige in an executive class car, there is really no alternative at present to an Audi, BMW, Jaguar or Mercedes-Benz, although the Lexus is pushing hard to get in the frame. But if comfort and reliability are sufficient, the choice widens considerably.

At the top of the shopping list for many a user-chooser who is not too conscious of status - even more so a private buyer's - should be one of the latest Mitsubishi Galant saloons or estates, which reach British showrooms on April 2.

List prices are keen, ranging from £16,995 for a two-litre, four-cylinder manual saloon to £23,725 for a 2.5-litre, V6 automatic estate car with air conditioning, power-adjusted front seats and leather trim.

The new cars make up the eighth generation of Galants in just over 20 years. Although they cost about the same as the cars they have replaced, their equipment is better. They have more safety and security measures, and lower insurance group ratings.

What has not changed is the three-year, unlimited mileage warranty, pioneered by Mitsubishi and still one of the best on offer. A three-year European recovery service is thrown in, too.

Although user-choosers naturally expect their cars to be 100 per cent reliable, at least they know they will not have to pay the cost of the repairs out of their own pockets if there is a breakdown after a couple of years. So, the finding of the latest Lex Survey of Motoring - that Mitsubishi cars are the most reliable in Britain - might be of less importance to user-choosers than to people who buy and run cars with their own money.

Remarkably, the independent survey, which is based on the experience Lex Vehicle Leasing had with 70,000 cars, found Mitsubishi products to be almost twice as reliable as the prestigious German makes.

The Mitsubishi breakdown rate was 4.23 per cent compared with 7.11 per cent

(BMW) and 7.61 per cent (Mercedes) although, to be fair, many of the BMW and Mercedes breakdown calls probably came from users who had had trouble with the anti-theft systems. And personal experience leads me to suspect it might often have been their own fault, not that of the cars.

I have driven almost every kind of vehicle with four or more wheels without problems, but complicated in-car entertainment systems with microscopic lettering on the knobs, thief alarms and engine immobilisers have more than once reduced me to impotent fury.

Knowing I could have provoked their misbehaviour by pressing the wrong button - or the right one at the wrong

time - did not help. But even the security system of the Galant V6, one of the most user-friendly cars I have encountered, gave me no trouble. And I rapidly mastered the important bits of the in-car entertainment system. (What I really mean is that I managed to lock in BBC radio 2, 3 and 4 and Classic FM and could find them again.)

The test Galant looked rounded and unremarkable; the new one has stronger styling lines and more elegant curves. While not exactly head-turning, it is individual enough not to be mistaken for its class rivals.

In a week of everything from pouring rain to bright sun, wintry cold to a hint of summer to come, I found a Galant V6 automatic the perfect companion. The leather-trimmed seats were yielding but supportive. Rear passengers had ample leg room,

even with tall people in the front seats.

The engine, spirited when accelerating, was silent on the motorway and "silk-smooth" at all times. Clever electronics controlling the automatic transmission detected and remembered my driving style and fixed the change up points accordingly.

I would not rate the Galant V6 as exciting. But then, I have little time for people who think driving on the public highway is a sporting challenge.

My role model is the Bentley chauffeur hurrying a VIP to Heathrow airport to catch Concorde. He dare not be late but is well aware that any disturbance will incur the great man's displeasure. In this mode, the Galant was pure pleasure.

On coarsely surfaced country roads and some stretches of motorway, the 60 series Bridgestone low-profile tyres could be heard rumbling. I put this down partly to the lack of mechanical and wind noise. In heavy rain, the rumbling was less obvious and their formidable wet grip much appreciated.

Multi-link suspension with a degree of passive rear-wheel steering has been featured on past Mitsubishi Galants. On this latest model, improved suspension mountings help keep the wheels more nearly vertical when cornering. The tyre treads stay square to the road and handling is always well balanced and secure.

The boot is huge and can be extended, estate car-style, by lowering the 60/40 split rear seat.

Standard equipment throughout the Galant range includes twin airbags (with extra side-impact airbags on the V6), anti-lock brakes, headlamp washers and heated, power-adjusted door mirrors.

A V6 automatic Galant could return up to 31mpg (9.1 l/100km); a manual two-litre model 34mpg (8.3 l/100km). The tank holds 14.1 gallons (64 litres). Both tank filler flap and boot lid are released from the driving seat. Will every other manufacturer please follow?

Mitsubishi's three-year, unlimited mileage warranties are still among the best on offer



The new Galant V6: not a head-turner but individual enough to stand apart from its class rivals

FOR SALE

Grand Cherokee Jeep "P" (Reg. August 1996)
Colour black, black leather interior.
Full specification. Tow bar.
Immaculate condition. 13,000 miles.
PRICE £27,995
OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01243 32217

